THREE LITTLE WOMEN AT WORK

By GABRIELLE E. JACKSON

THREE LITTLE WOMEN
PRICE.....$1.00
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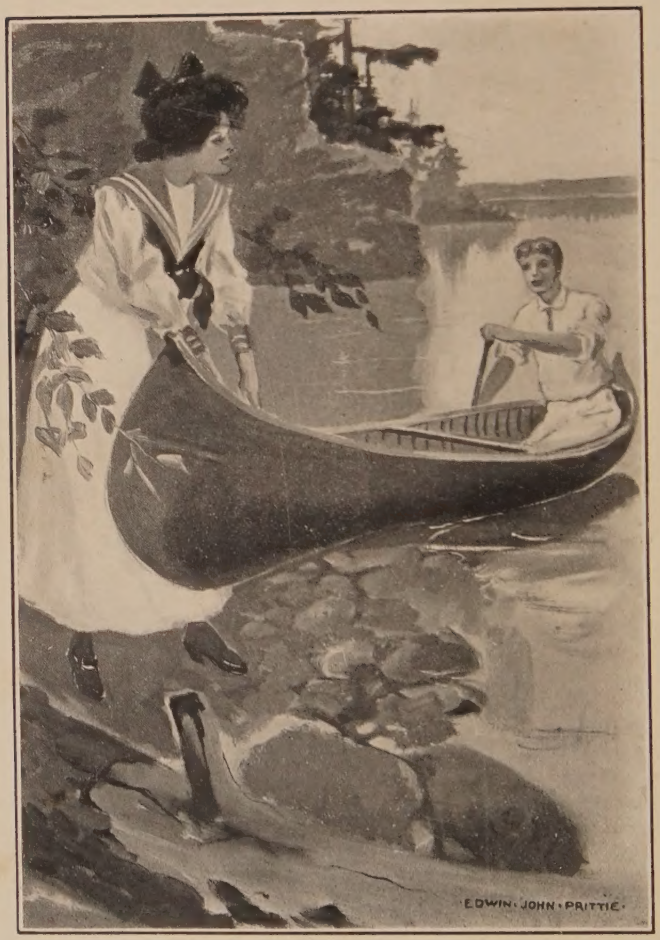
Stories for Girls
BY
GABRIELLE E. JACKSON

THE JOHN C. WINSTON COMPANY
PHILADELPHIA

Louise M. Van Liesveld
Age 14 yrs.

Merry Christmas
Dec 25, 1910



She quickly turned, laying hold of the bow.
(See Page 213.)

THREE LITTLE WOMEN AT WORK

A Story for Girls

—BY—

GABRIELLE
E.
JACKSON

Author of
"Three Little Women,"
"The Joy of Piney Hill,"
"Wee Winkles,"
"Sunlight and Shadow,"
"By Love's Sweet Rule,"
etc.

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THREE LITTLE WOMEN AT WORK

CHAPTER I.

Which Shall It Be?

"Well, if someone would kindly settle this question 'pine blank' for me, as Mammy would put it, I'd thank them to my dying day," said Eleanor Carruth, as she sank upon a low chair before the open window that soft June evening, her elbows resting upon her knees, her fingers thrust perplexedly into her pretty hair, across which the evening air was blowing as though mischievously trying to rumple it more and set loose the waving locks.

"I bet Aunt Eleanor would settle it slap bang," cried little Jean, her sister, as she sat tying dainty ribbons around the dozens of daintier little boxes piled upon the table near her. "She'd say go, and you'll be just too silly

for words if you don't," concluded that young woman with the sagest of sage wags of her curly-crowned, auburn head.

"That's easy enough for Aunt Eleanor to say. She hasn't got to think where her next new shoes come from, nor whether she'll walk down town to save car fare, or ride just because she wishes to; and that's the difference twixt tweedledum and tweedledee. Oh, why *can't* I absorb all the wisdom I'd like to hold just as a sponge absorbs all the water it can hold——"

"And have someone come along, catch you up, and give you a good squeeze and send it sousing in every direction," cried Constance, her sister, with a merry laugh. "Wouldn't that be awful though? To find one's self suddenly squeezed dry of wits? Rather think I'd prefer gaining mine by a slower process."

"Hard to choose. The slower process is so expensive," was Eleanor's reply, as she wagged her head doubtfully. "But I've got it to do, and right quick, too," she concluded.

"Mother, what do you say?" and Eleanor rose suddenly from her seat to cross the room and drop upon the floor beside her mother who sat helping Jean.

Mrs. Carruth placed her box upon the table, and taking the perplexed face in her hands, stooped forward and kissed it gently, then smilingly said:

"If I argue *for* the college, dear, it means four years of hard, hard work for my girl, in which I am powerless to help her. Work which will mean ceaseless effort upon her part in order to win final success. If I argue *against* it, it means that she will not work so hard, perhaps, and will have more time with us in the dear home, but it would also mean the sacrifice of her most cherished ambition. So how shall I decide?"

Mrs. Carruth's voice was very tender, her eyes full of love-light for this eldest daughter, now forced to decide upon her future: Whether she ought to enter college, for which she had qualified in the fine school from which

she had graduated with honors only four days before, and when her great aunt had offered to defray her expenses, whether she ought immediately to accept a position open to her in a small school, in Riveredge, and thus contribute to the common expenses of the family, as Constance, although two years her junior, was already doing. This was a very serious question, for since Mr. Carruth's death, nearly three years before, and the heavy losses which Mrs. Carruth had since sustained, the family exchequer had been at rather a low ebb, and the three daughters had been doing their utmost to replenish it.

During the past winter Eleanor had taken pupils to coach for the high school work, and had contributed the money so obtained toward the family needs. Constance had discovered a profitable field for her one accomplishment, candy making, and was now working away most industriously, rising early each morning to make innumerable pounds of pralines, fudge, caramels, or butter-scotch, which later she

sent by the local carrier to her candy booth in the Arcade in South Riveredge, where "Constance B's Candies" had already become famous, and where the youthful merchant was beginning to reap substantial returns from her energy and industry.

It was no light undertaking; it meant rise early, work hard for at least two hours, take her breakfast, and then set off for High School, in which she was now a junior. Often, as upon this evening, she was obliged to pack the pretty boxes, and tie up the extra candy needed for special orders. Hardly a day ever passed without Mammy, who always went to South Riveredge to look after the candy booth and bring back the results of the unique sales, finding a note containing an order for some extra candy for a tea, a luncheon, or some form of entertainment, so rapidly had the fame of the little booth grown, and these orders had to be filled after Constance returned from school. Jean, whose interest had never flagged from the moment she had been

taken into the firm, after her forceful determination *to be,* and the stormy scene which had been the outcome of her first venture in the mercantile world, was very faithful to the enterprise and rarely failed to be on hand to help tie up the boxes, her deft little fingers fashioning wonderfully dainty little bows. For a ten-year-old lassie, whose strong point was *not* repose, Jean had managed to keep "head to the wind" to a wonderful degree. The fact of being a "sure enough partner," and claiming old Baltie as a silent one, was no small incentive, for Baltie was her pride and pet. Since his rescue by the little girl from his former brutal owner, Baltie had apparently grown younger day by day. Twenty-five years old and totally blind though he was, the old horse's blue blood told, and he daily testified to what care and affection could do for him. For years Baltie had been Grandfather Raulsbury's pet, and when at the old man's death he fell into Jabe Raulsbury's ruthless hands, it did not take long for the changed conditions

to tell upon the poor old horse. Just a little longer and Baltie's days would have ended. Had not Jean come to his rescue at the moment she did, old Baltie would never have figured in this story. As it is, he is destined to figure conspicuously, for Baltie loved Jean with a devotion beautiful to see, and his love was a pretty lesson to greater folk.

"Yes," said Eleanor, continuing the subject. "I dare say I've no business to ask you to decide this question at all. It's just naturally up to me to do it myself, and I'll do it or die. I've got to settle it before another week passes, so I might just as well settle it before another night does. Now go on with your candy packing. Thus far Connie's the chief light in the Carruth corporation, and is doing more toward keeping the pot boiling than I'm likely to do in ten years, I reckon. But now I'm going up to my room to think hard for one solid hour and if I don't think to some purpose my name is not Eleanor Maxwell Carruth. By-by, I'm off," and springing suddenly to her feet

Eleanor kissed her mother, accompanying it with a spasmodic hug, and turning, ran from the room, Constance calling after her:

"Good luck go with your decision!"

Mrs. Carruth's eyes followed her with wonderful tenderness for this eldest daughter was very close to the mother's heart, and she yearned to have the life of her first-born rounded out in all its perfection. From a little child Eleanor had longed to be a college girl, and the wish had colored all her life. Until Mr. Carruth's death there had never seemed any question regarding the outcome of her hopes, but now everything was changed, and the outlook doubtful.

Mr. Carruth's aunt, for whom Eleanor was named, was fully prepared to give the girl the four-years' college course and not feel the burden of it in the least, but Eleanor Maxwell Carruth, Senior, was a lady from whom it was not easy to accept favors.

"My goodness, I guess its lucky I haven't as brilliant a mind as Nonie! What a state of

ferment the whole family would be in if I, too, had to decide whether I'd go to college next year or be a candy-lady," laughed Constance as she placed in the large boxes in which they would be conveyed to South Riveredge, the eight dozen little delicately-tinted, satin-finished paper boxes from the lids of which her own bonny face looked out to tell the world who made the candy. Mammy's idea had been a brilliant one, and no one was prouder of the success with which the original of that photograph was meeting in her candy enterprise than Mammy herself.

"How pretty they look, don't they?" said Jean, cocking her head upon one side like a meditative sparrow, and regarding the half-pound and pound boxes, some white, some lavender, some pale yellow. "Connie, wasn't that a fine idea of mine to have the candies and the boxes match? See the violet cream walnuts are just the shade of their boxes, the lemon pralines are like the yellow boxes, and the white nut-candy is so pretty in the white boxes."

"You are the cleverest little merchant I know, and I'm as proud as Punch to have you for a partner," cried Constance, pausing in her work to gather Jean into her arms and give her a fervent kiss. "There! That is the only way I can show you how proud."

Jean glowed with pleasure, for in her sight there was no one in the world like Constance, although she often led this sister a life of it. Constance, on her part, was devoted to this little sister who grew closer and closer to her as she grew older, for although five years her junior, these two, strange to say, seemed to have more in common than Constance and Eleanor had.

"There, it is all ready to go now," cried Constance as the last box was tied up and made ready.

"An' I'se on han' fer ter see de goin'," announced a mellow voice, as Mammy, the nurse of all the children, and their mother before them, appeared in the door, her gay bandana as gay as ever, her print gown as im-

maculate, and her apron as perfectly laundered. The good old face was kindly as ever and as whimsical. Advancing into the room she took up the boxes and turned to carry them out to her domains where they would be handed over to Jim Sparrow, with many admonitions from Mammy, "not to let 'em come ter no harm lessen he want his haid bus' open de next time she see him."

"Reckon I hatter git up mighty early termorrer. Eight dozen boxes done gone dis mawnin' and eight mo' a-goin' termorrer mawnin'. Has you gotter make more in the mawnin', honey?" she asked, looking over her shoulder at Constance as she was about to leave the room.

"No, Mammy, thank goodness, I haven't! I'll take a morning off, for I made enough this afternoon to fill the special orders and leave some over for the booth. How much was there on hand when you counted them to-day?"

"Fo'teen boxes," answered Mammy promptly.

"That's plenty. Thank goodness this is Friday night. I can run down there myself to-morrow and look things over. I'm glad vacation will soon be here for then you won't have to trot off every day. I'll do the trotting and save your bones," ended Constance, patting Mammy's arm by way of a caress.

"My bones ain't a-sufferin' none. Dey's ol', no sputin dat, but dey's mighty tough," retorted Mammy.

"They are the dearest bones in the land, Mammy, and we all love them," cried Jean, bounding from her chair to rush to Mammy. "And now come on and tell me a story before I go to bed. I've been good as gold all day and you know I've got to have it."

"When yo' done kiss de blarney-stone, chile?" asked Mammy as Jean almost pushed her and her load of boxes toward the door, for the story, to be all it should be, must be told in Mammy's own domains, and on this beautiful June night that meant the porch outside the kitchen door.

CHAPTER II.

The First Shadow.

"Good morning, Miss Willing," said Constance pleasantly, as she opened the low door which gave entrance to her candy booth in the Arcade the following morning.

"How'd do," answered the young girl spoken to, as she glanced up and then quickly turned to adjust the switches on her telephone board, thus avoiding the eyes of the person addressing her. Miss Willing had been in charge of the telephone switchboard in the Arcade for the past two years, long before the little candy booth was dreamed of, where she, as the only one of her sex in the corridor of the Arcade, held undisputed sway and claimed all attention. And her reign had not been interfered with in the slightest degree until the establishment of Constance's unique enterprise. Indeed, was not now, only that from

some strange distorted fancy she chose so to regard it. Had the matter been brought before Constance from Miss Willing's point of view she would have manifested only blank incredulity. Why should she, just Constance Carruth, a young school girl, striving to aid her mother over one of the rough places in life by making and selling candy, affect Miss Willing's outgoings or incomings in any way? Constance had yet to learn that Miss Willing's world and her own were widely divided, even though their ages differed by a few months only. Constance was now sixteen, Miss Willing not quite seventeen. Constance was in many respects still a child, full of the joy of living, finding her pleasure in simple things, her happiness in her home, and those within it whom she loved so dearly; her ambitions achieved when she met with success in the enterprise with which she hoped to relieve the straitened circumstances of her family. Beyond that the venture held absolutely no significance for her; the Arcade no attractions.

In Miss Willing's case it was quite different. She had striven in every way in her power to secure the position in the Arcade, one of the principal business centers of South Riveredge, and a point at which the greatest number of business men daily congregated. She had brought to bear upon her desire to secure the position every particle of influence she possessed, and for two blissful years had found her telephone booth the center of attraction. There was hardly an hour of the day when some member of the masculine world which constantly passed to and fro could not be seen at the telephone booth. Many times, it is true, upon his own legitimate business of getting the phone number he wished, but not infrequently lingering to talk with the handsome girl in charge, for Miss Willing was certainly handsome in her striking way. Tall, remarkably developed for her years, a fine complexion, large, dark eyes, and a mass of raven-black hair arranged in a manner which made one wonder at what hour of the morning she must

rise in order to create such a coiffure of waves, braids and puffs, a truly colossal structure. Always gowned in a most striking manner, it was no wonder the girl attracted attention. That scarcely a man passed along the corridors of the Arcade without giving more than a passing glance at the "Hello Girl," as many of them designated her, although there *were* some fathers with lovable daughters in their own homes who felt a throb of pity in their hearts for this young girl, so placed in the great world that she could hardly escape criticism, however circumspectly she conducted herself. Alas! Miss Willing's chief characteristic was *not* modesty.

On the other hand, Constance Carruth's was the modesty born of an utter want of self-consciousness, the refinement of generations of ancestors whose positions in the great social world, and world of culture, had never been questioned. That she, too, was beautiful, with a beauty far more satisfying than Miss Willing's type, never occurred to the little girl.

Constance was a little above the average height for her age, slight, but well formed, with small, shapely feet and hands, a well-shaped head, beautifully poised, and carried with the little air of stateliness which Mammy pronounced, "De livin' suah sign ob de Blairsdale blood." Masses of dark, wavy brown hair fluffed in a natural pompadour over her forehead and was coiled low on her neck and topped by a black ribbon bow, thus making a pretty girlish coiffure. Her face was a perfect oval, her skin a pure olive with a most delicate flush on the cheeks. A firm mouth with the softest red lips imaginable revealed, when smiling, faultless teeth. Perhaps Constance's eyes were her most remarkable feature. They were large, oval-shaped and forever changing. If two individuals had been asked the color of Constance Carruth's eyes they would doubtless have disagreed straightway, yet each would have been perfectly sincere in her belief. At one time they would seem almost hazel brown; at another black as midnight, a trick of the

pupils and the long lashes shading them, which were nearly black, and exactly matched the beautifully-penciled eyebrows above them.

Constance Carruth had a quiet little dignity of manner when beyond the walls of her home that was very charming, although she could romp and frolic with the merriest on occasion. A pretty illustration of "womanhood and childhood fleet" was this young girl.

Entering her booth she quickly removed her hat and gloves and set about what she called her Saturday house cleaning. The outer door of the glass case in which her candies were displayed for sale had already been unlocked by Rastus, the colored janitor of the Arcade, with whom Mammy had struck up such a friendship, and who now took almost as deep an interest in the enterprise as did Mammy herself. Each morning, punctually at eight o'clock, "Uncle Rastus," as he was called by everyone in the Arcade, unlocked the glass door on the outer side of the case, dusted everything with the greatest care, and placed the

little cash box upon the counter, hanging above it the unique sign:

"Constance B's candies.
Take what you wish,
Leave cost of goods taken.
Make your change from my cash box,
Respecting my patrons' integrity
Constance B. C."

Kindly close the door.

Then Uncle Rastus went his way, although it is, perhaps, only just to him to say that he carefully kept an eye upon the little booth, and not much took place in or near it of which he was not fully aware.

Mammy had said that there were fourteen boxes left from the previous day's stock. Constance had sent over eight dozen boxes early that morning, five dozen for a special order. This left exactly fifty boxes for the day's sale; none too many, for Saturday was always a busy day.

As Constance was arranging her case, placing near each other the boxes most in harmony of color, Rastus came up, bowing his best bow for this offshoot of the Blairsdale stock, for Mammy had left no possible chance for him to go amiss on *that* score.

"Mawnin', Missie. It suah is a pleasure fer ter see yo' a-lookin' so peart dis mawnin'. Ah makes my bes' respec's to yo', an' hopes yo' finds eb'ryt'ing cordin' to yo' lakin.' Ah takes a mighty sight o' pride in de 'pearance of dat boof masef. Done had some customers a-reddy. Dey teken a powerful sight ob de sweet stuff, too. Nigh 'bout 's much 's dey can tote. Massa Stuyv'sent *he* cyared off fo' poun's hissef. An' Massa Po'tah, he tek a heap mo'. An' dat lady what gwine ter hab de candy table up yander at de chu'ch on High Street, bress my soul, ef *she* aint hatter hab a nigger long wid her ter tote all *she* teken. Golly! bi'sness cert'in *is* spry. Bress de Lawd!"

Rastus was a good deal like a phonograph

when he got started, but accustomed to his race all her life, Constance let him run on, meanwhile smilingly attending to her duties and arranging her stock.

"Is eberyting all kerrect, an' de cash jist right?" asked Rastus with great interest as Constance opened her cash box to compare the sum within it to the number of boxes sold. "Ah takes a heap o' intrus in de returns ob de speculatiom," was his next observation, as he drew closer to watch her.

Knowing the interest he manifested to be prompted by the kindliest feeling for her welfare, rather than the curiosity so often demonstrated by the colored people, Constance answered as she turned over the contents of the box:

"I think everything is just right, Rastus. I've been pretty lucky so far, you know; nobody has tried to cheat the little candy girl. Here is Mr. Porter's check for three dollars and sixty cents for his six pounds. Gracious! He loves sweets like a honey-bee."

"Dat's de truf. Jes de born truf!" interjected Rastus with a mellow laugh.

"I fancy though, that a good many boxes find their way to his friends," added Constance. "And here is Mr. Stuyvesant's check for two dollars and forty cents for his four pounds. And, my goodness! don't I feel rich! Here is Mrs. Stoddard's for thirty dollars for sixty pounds! Five whole dozen, Rastus, at one sale. Isn't that splendid though?"

"Wish ter de Lawd dey hab a fair ebery day ob de week! I shuah does," cried Rastus enthusiastically.

"Better not wish that, Rastus," laughed Constance. "Mammy and I had to work all yesterday afternoon to fill this order and we would never be able to stand it every day."

"Dat's so; dat's so," agreed Rastus, shaking his old head solemnly. "Queer now, ain't it, how our very fust famblys are settin' out fer ter tek keer ob demselves? Somehow'r uder I cyant jist recomsile ma'sef ter de plan. *Hit don' seem ter fit 'em nohow.*"

"We'd better do that than need things, or take them at the cost of another's labor, Rastus."

"Dunno, dunno," said Rastus doubtfully. "Well, is de kash all O. K.?"

Constance laid aside the three checks which accounted for seventy boxes of her candy, saying:

"These settle for seventy pounds, Rastus. Goodness! doesn't that sound a lot! And here are sixty cents in change for another pound someone has bought. That makes seventy-one boxes sold. Now I'll count those on hand and my stock will be taken."

She quickly told off the number of boxes remaining in the case. There were thirty-seven, two pounds less than there should have been to make boxes and cash balance.

"I guess someone has forgotten to leave the change for two of my boxes," said Constance. "They'll no doubt find out their mistake and bring it later."

"Someone ain' settle up?" asked Rastus quickly.

"No, there should be a dollar and twenty cents more in the cash box, but it is nothing to feel any concern over," said Constance smiling into the old man's face at his look of deep anxiety.

"Yes'm 'tis, too. I don' lak ter hab 'tings a-goin' crosswise when I'se 'sponsible fer 'em," asserted the old man.

"But you are not responsible for them, Rastus. No one is. You just look after this booth for Mammy and me, and do it for good friendship's sake. The cash box is intrusted to the honor of my customers, you know, and I don't believe it will ever suffer at their hands. The booth has been open nearly five months now, you know, and I've never met with a single loss, and everybody is perfectly lovely to me."

"An' bress Gawd, why shouldn't dey be?" snapped Rastus.

Constance laughed aloud. Rastus' indignation was so genuine.

"Please, ma'am, lemme know if dem pussons comes 'long ter squar up. It pesters my min' mightily, kase dey don' ainybody but me hab de handlin' of dat cash box."

"Nonsense, Rastus! Why, anybody and everybody has the handling of it. I dare say that ninety people out of a hundred if asked would say the wonder lay in the fact that I'm not robbed daily. But I'm never going to give up my faith in humanity. What do two boxes amount to, anyway?"

"Dey's *two boxes,*" retorted Rastus sullenly, as he turned to leave the booth. "Dey's *two* boxes," and he shot a glance at the 'phone board from beneath his shaggy gray brows. As he did so Constance took a box of candy from her booth and opening the door crossed the little passage dividing it from the 'phone booth.

"Miss Willing," she said pleasantly, "will you accept a box of candy from me? This has been a sort of red letter day in my trade; I don't have special orders for fairs very often,

and I'd like to give you this as a little souvenir."

The pretty speech was made in the friendliest manner, and Constance was hardly prepared for its reception. Rising quickly from her chair Miss Willing drew back from the hand extending the box to her, flushed, then grew pale as she said:

"Oh, no, thank you, Miss Carruth. I can't take it. You are very kind—but—but—no, I won't take it—I don't want it."

For a brief second Constance looked at her in surprise. Then added:

"Why, I wish you would, please."

"No, I can't. I won't," was the positive rebuff to the overture, as Miss Willing turned to answer the buzzer which just then summoned her to her duties; duties for once, apparently welcome. Constance said no more, but turning, walked back to her candy booth, a slight flush upon her face.

"Speck I could smack her *good* fer dat, de

little fool," muttered Rastus, who had been an unsuspected witness of the scene. "An' I reckon I knows a t'ing or two what *she* don't reckon I does."

CHAPTER III.

The Siren.

Much puzzled by Miss Willing's refusal to accept the boxes of candy, Constance entered her booth, and opening her hand-bag took from it a piece of fancy work which she had brought with her to while away the intervals between sales. She rarely spent a morning at the booth, finding her time, as a rule, more than filled in making her candies, for Saturday morning was always an exceptionally busy one. The booth was so constructed that Constance when seated in her low chair was completely hidden from the eyes of those passing in and out of the Arcade if she chose to be, and this was exactly what she did choose. Even those coming to the booth to purchase candy were unaware of her presence unless she chose to make it known to them.

As the morning advanced customer after

customer came to get candy, some taking one box, some more, each depositing the amount in the cash box and, if necessary, making change. They were all strangers to Constance, but more than one paused at the 'phone booth to speak to Miss Willing, who always seemed to have time for a chat. In the course of the morning a man from Mr. Porter's office came to the booth, selected two boxes, deposited his money in the cash box and went directly to Miss Willing's switchboard. He was a bright, handsome young fellow, probably eighteen or nineteen years of age, boyish in appearance and manner, the son of one of the most highly esteemed families in Riveredge. During the previous year his father, an intimate friend of Mr. Porter's, had died suddenly, leaving his family in very straitened circumstances. Mr. Porter, feeling a deep interest in them, immediately offered the son a position in his office, not because he was especially qualified to fill it, for he certainly was not, having no further knowledge of stenography and typewriting

than that taught in the high school from which he had just graduated. Constance knew him, and frequently met him at social gatherings, but he had always chosen to regard her as a very youthful member of society and somewhat beneath his notice, she being only a junior up to the present time, whereas *he* boasted the glory of seniorship. Now had come the added honors of a business man.

Sauntering leisurely up to the 'phone booth, with the air of a man who had all the time in the world at his disposal, he raised his hat, bowed to Miss Willing who, glancing up at him in a manner to flatter a much older and saner head, and said:

"You seem to have time to burn."

"O, nothing doing up in the office just now, so thought I'd embrace the opportunity to stroll down here and pass the time of day with you. It was right cruel of the Public Service Corporation to establish you here. How do they expect the occupants of the Arcade offices to keep away from such an electrical magnet?"

"O, go on. You're the limit. What do you think Porter'll say if he catches you down here talking with me when you ought to be in the office banging the machine?"

"Hang the machine! There isn't enough business going on in that office to keep *him* busy, let alone me. It's perfect nonsense for him to employ a stenographer, but I suppose it gives a tone to the office to have one. But let's cut it out. It's a blamed bore anyway, and I never *was* intended for an office grind. I've got *my* ideas, and some day you'll hear about them. I didn't come down here to talk office talk though. Better subjects nearer at hand. How about the 'sweeties,' as our English cousins call them. 'Sweets to the sweet,' isn't that it? My weekly contribution. They're usually pretty fair, aren't they, for local productions? Can't come up to Huyler's, of course. Wonder what struck that little Carruth girl to set up the booth, anyway? She was always a queer sort of girl. Seemed to

feel herself years older and volumes wiser than other people."

"O, yes. What number?" suddenly broke in Miss Willing, turning to her switchboard. "70 R? Yes, 70 R. 70 R—yes—all right." Miss Willing then turned to the donor of the boxes of candy and said:

"Awfully good of you to remember me, but, of course, I *knew* you would. *I* know the people I can count on. *Some* may think I'm easily taken in, but—well—*I'm* fly. It don't take me long to catch on let me tell you."

"I know it! I *like* a girl with some snap and sense to her. I haven't any use for your extra-proper, mamma-and-chaperon kind. They're all dead slow. Now *you're* the independent sort; you know what you're about all the time and—oh, hang that buzzer! The confounded thing doesn't give a fellow time to get a word in edgeways."

"There! They're fixed. If you're so anxious to get a word in edgeways, why don't you come where I can *listen?* Of course, I'm inter-

rupted all the time *here,*" was the significant bait thrown.

It was quickly snapped up.

"When and where *can* you listen?" was promptly asked.

"Do you think I sit here and *starve* all day? Most people have to eat, don't they?"

"Where do you take your luncheon?" asked this experienced youth.

"Wherever my friends are good enough to invite me to take it," was the answer, with a toss of the bedecked head, as another interruption came in the shape of Hadyn Stuyvesant, who, after greeting Miss Willing courteously, asked for a number. "357 J. 357 J," repeated Miss Willing, poking at the switchboard. "Lovely morning, ain't it, Mr. Stuyvesant? Yes, 357 J. J—J, what's the matter with you down there? I *said* J. You'd better listen then. O, cut it out, I *did.* I haven't seen you in just *days,* Mr. Stuyvesant. I don't think you're as good a customer next door as you *used* to be. Just see *here* what

Mr. Grand has just brought me. *Two* pounds of this delicious candy. *He's* the right kind of a friend to have, ain't he? Yes?—357 J? Well, you've been long enough gettin' it—I didn't hear? I *did,* too! I've been callin', callin', callin' every second, *haven't* I, Mr. Stuyvesant? Well, *report* if you want to. *I've* got friends who'll say I *am* attentive. Yes, Mr. Stuyvesant, and, oh, by the way, when you've talked with your party I wish you'd tell me something about the S. P. C. A. I've got a cat—oh, yes, I beg your pardon, booth Number 4; party's waitin'. Now ain't that just *like* him? So mighty superior. I feel as if I could slap him sometimes. But he's handsome, ain't he?"

"Depends upon what style you admire," was the frigid reply.

Miss Willing giggled. "I *thought* I'd get a rise out of you. You're dead easy."

At that moment Mr. Stuyvesant emerged from the booth, came to the switchboard and

handing Miss Willing a nickel, said with an amused smile:

"That was an instance of journeying a mile to go a block. If I had known Miss Carruth was in her booth I might have saved my time and your trouble. I'm afraid I'll have to ask you to excuse me just now. I'll come another time to give you any information you wish about the S. P. C. A. Good morning," and again raising his hat Mr. Stuyvesant stepped across to the candy booth, peered over the counter and laughingly said:

"The mouse in this cage kept so quiet that I never suspected her presence until I was told by her mother, five miles away, that I'd find her at my elbow. 'I smell a mouse' had no significance in this case, Miss Constance. How are you?" and one hand was held out to grasp Constance's as the other raised his hat.

"Were you really calling our number and I right here?" asked Constance, laughing. "I was busy counting stitches on Jean's sweater and didn't even know you were there. Usually,

though, I'm quite wide awake to all that's happening around me here. It's such a busy, bustling place, isn't it? I often wonder what keeps people in such a perpetual rush. But what can I do for you, Mr. Stuyvesant? It seems to me you have laid in a pretty good supply of candy for one while, so you surely can't want more."

"No, it is not the candy this time, but the maker of it. I have got to drive over to Riveredge between twelve and one and would be delighted to take you home if I may. I 'phoned over first to ask if you were coming up, and felt rather foolish when your mother said you were at your booth. Will you be ready to go about that time?"

"Yes, indeed, any time you're ready. It's awfully good of you to think of me. Are you driving Comet?" asked Constance eagerly.

"Comet, of course. We are a pair, you know," smiled Hadyn Stuyvesant.

"Good! Nothing would keep me from going then."

"Well, that is a feather for Comet, but rather a set-down for his master, Miss Constance. I was rather flattering myself that the master might claim some of the honor of your company, but—"

"Oh, you must be willing to take second place when Comet is so in evidence. There never was anything so beautiful as that horse, and you know I'd 'give my kingdom for a horse' anytime," was the merry retort. Then growing serious she added: "But I want to thank you, Mr. Stuyvesant, for the liberal check you left in my cash box this morning. Why, I've nearly had my head turned to-day. Such a rush of trade has never been known since the booth was opened."

"Good! I'm mighty glad to hear it. It is now eleven. I will call for you at about twelve-thirty. Good morning, Miss Constance. May your trade continue to increase," and Hadyn Stuyvesant hurried away, quite forgetful of the young lady at the 'phone switch, who had not lost a single word of the conversation at

the candy booth, although she had contrived at the same time to hold her youthful admirer by her side. As Hadyn Stuyvesant hurried down the corridor a sharp glance was flashed after him from a pair of black eyes. Constance at once resumed her knitting, humming to herself a merry little air as she settled back into her corner.

When twelve struck Miss Willing disconnected her switchboard, jumped up from her seat, and, giving her hair a pat to settle any possible disarrangement, shook out her skirts and announced.

"Well, *this* is *my* lunch hour and I'm just simply starved. Do you want to stay here and attend the booth, or will you come along?"

"I'll neither 'stay' nor 'come.' I'll *go* and take you with me. Where would you like to take luncheon, Miss Willing?"

"Is that straight or are you putting up a big bluff?" was the challenging answer.

Fred Grand flushed to his hair. Miss Willing was no fool and saw that she had made a

mistake. "Ah, come on," she laughed. "Didn't I say I could get a rise out of you? You're the easiest thing on record. What a kid you are, ain't you? You take everything in dead earnest. Now don't get a grouch on and I'll be just as good as gold and not tease you until—the next time. We'll go down to Sherman's and get something good."

If she noticed the look of dismay which suddenly overspread Fred Grand's face she did not give evidence of it. Sherman's was the Waldorf of South Riveredge, and a luncheon for two, even if modestly ordered, meant a serious inroad into the ten dollars just paid him by Mr. Porter, one dollar and twenty cents of which had already gone to purchase two pounds of candy for this fascinating young lady, and at least half of his weekly earnings were supposed to contribute to the home expenses.

Going to a little locker Miss Willing took from it a huge black hat, upon which still more huge plumes waved, and proceeded to adjust it

before a small mirror fastened to the inner side of the locker door. When long, black silk gloves were drawn on, she took from the locker two boxes of candy and crossing to the switch table picked up those which Fred Grand had just given her, saying with a toss of the superb head structure:

"Don't think *you* are the only one who can put up a treat!" and with her boxes much in evidence, stepped through the little gateway, slamming the gate behind her, and sailed down the corridor with her fascinated admirer in attendance.

CHAPTER IV.

A New Suggestion.

"So all goes well with the enterprise, does it, Miss Constance?" asked Hadyn Stuyvesant, when a half-hour after Miss Willing's dashing exit from the Arcade he and Constance were bowling along in the runabout drawn by beautiful Comet.

"Perfectly fine, Mr. Stuyvesant. Why the first thing you know I shall be quite independent and have a bank account all my very own. Wouldn't that be funny though? Just think of having a passbook as mother has, and 'Constance Blairsdale Carruth' across it in dashing black letters! Gracious, wouldn't I be a much set-up girl, though!" and Constance gave a little bounce emphasizing her rapture at the thought. The bounce had its reflex action in Comet, who, instantly aware of the jar given the runabout, promptly cut a caper.

"Steady, old chap. Is the enthusiasm so infectious?" laughed his master, drawing gently in upon the reins, for Comet's mouth was as velvet. The pretty ears were turned back to catch the master's voice, the neck more proudly arched to testify to his delight, for Comet and Hadyn Stuyvesant were more to each other than merely a fine horse and its owner. From a foal Comet had followed his master as a dog would have, and the understanding between the two was perfect. "You see Comet is trying to express his sympathy, Miss Constance."

"He is a wonder, isn't he, Mr. Stuyvesant? No, really, don't smile, I mean it. In the first place he is the most beautiful horse I have ever seen, and so wonderfully intelligent. I never see you driving by without being perfectly wild to call to you to stop and let me pet Comet."

"Then why don't you? I am sure that he would be delighted, and ought to be greatly flattered. As his owner I certainly am. Would you like to drive him now? He has a fine mouth."

"O, *may* I? I'd love to," cried Constance, eagerly.

For answer Hadyn Stuyvesant placed the reins in her hands, watching with considerable interest the practiced manner in which she held and handled them, for he hated a bungler in anything. That Comet was a gentleman born he instantly demonstrated by the added grace he put into his action, which seemed to say, "*This* is my ladies' gait. I never waste it on the sterner sex."

"Oh, you dear!" cried Constance softly, her cheeks glowing and her eyes shining with delight. "O, Mr. Stuyvesant, if I could have such a horse *I'd* never ask for anything else, I believe."

"Not even a harness and vehicle for him?" asked her companion with a smile that lighted up his face and displayed his fine teeth.

"Well—maybe—I dare say like lots of other things, the possession of one would make a few more necessary. Mother often tells a funny story of a southern friend who married a

northern man and brought North with her a lot of old mahogany furniture from her home in the South. It didn't suit the northern house a bit and it was five years before they got settled. They finally had to *build* a house to fit the furniture. Perhaps I'd be five years getting the right sort of vehicle and harness if I had a horse like Comet. Meanwhile, perhaps, I'd have to ride horseback," was the girl's laughing answer, as she guided the horse along the beautiful road leading from South Riveredge to her home.

"Do you ever ride? Have you ever ridden?" asked her companion eagerly.

"I haven't ridden in over three years. Eleanor and I used to ride with father when we were little things. He loved it." A sad ring came into her voice as she mentioned her father, for the three years since he went out of her life forever had been ones of longing for the good comrade of her childhood. Although now nearly seventeen, Constance was a girl still in action and thought. Hadyn Stuyves-

ant's sensitive ear caught the note of sadness in her voice and he quickly asked:

"Will you ride with me some afternoon, Miss Constance? Comet is a perfectly trained saddle-horse, and I will ride Jove, from Pringle's stable. If you will just let me know when you will be at liberty, I'll be delighted to call for you."

"How splendid! But I'm afraid I've entirely outgrown my riding habit, so I doubt *that* fun is out of the question. But *how* I'd love to!" The face turned up to Hadyn Stuyvesant's was a conflict between pleasure and disappointment. He looked at her a moment and then said:

"I wonder if you will take offense if I ask you to do me a favor?"

"Why *should* I? You are always doing me favors," was the frank response.

"Then on that score I'll venture to ask it: Will you let me bring my mother's riding habit for your use? You are about the same size, and the habit has not been used since she last

wore it in Vevey. We rode together a great deal there during my holidays spent with her. We were very happy together." He paused suddenly and turned to look off across the river along which the road wound its way. Constance looked up quickly, her great brown eyes full of pity, for she knew the story of Hadyn Stuyvesant's devotion to his mother during her long years of invalidism and residence in Switzerland where she was now sleeping. Impulsive in everything she did she quickly laid her right hand upon her companion's as it rested upon the lap robe and said in a voice full of sympathy: "I am *so* sorry. We *all* are. Yes, bring the habit. I will wear it and ride with you, and—and—please don't think me presumptuous, Mr. Stuyvesant, for we all realize how lonely you must be nowadays, but won't you let us lend you a little bit of *our* mother sometimes? Perhaps it would help just a little. She is very dear to us, you know."

For a moment Hadyn Stuyvesant neither turned nor spoke. He was fighting the battle

a man fights once in a lifetime. He believed he had conquered his grief when he bade farewell to the mound in the cemetery on the borders of beautiful Lake Geneva a year before, but something in the young girl beside him constantly recalled to him the little mother whom he loved so tenderly, whose *all* he had been and who had depended upon him so entirely since her husband's death when Hadyn was still a boy. When he regained his self-control he turned to find Constance looking up at him with eyes full of womanly sympathy. Laying his free hand over the small one resting upon his own he said in a voice full of deep feeling:

"Little girl, you are offering much more than you realize and I shall never forget it. If your mother will permit it, I will gladly *borrow* her since her daughters are so ready to 'lend' me something so very precious. Mothers are not often to be had on such generous terms. Forgive me for forgetting myself and saddening you. It was inconsiderate of me. I ask your pardon, and will try to behave better in

future. Again I thank you with all my heart. And now we have come to our turn; Comet knows it, you see, and I think will grow to know it even better from now on. That offer is too valuable to be slighted."

At the concluding words Hadyn Stuyvesant took the reins gently from Constance's hands and turned the corner leading to her home. As they drew up Mrs. Carruth come out upon the piazza to welcome them.

"I see you found her, Mr. Stuyvesant. We began to wonder if she had deserted her stand. Thank you so much for bringing my girlie home in such a delightful manner. Come right in with her and have luncheon. We are just ready to take our seats and Mammy has laid an extra cover for you."

Hadyn Stuyvesant had just stepped from the runabout, and was about to assist Constance from it. Glancing over his shoulder with a wistful look at the sweet-faced woman who stood at the top of the steps he asked:

"Will it not be an intrusion?"

"Our *friends* can never intrude, you know. Take Comet out to the stable to hob-nob with Baltie."

"When you put it *that* way I've got to give in. I'll be with you in half a second. Come on old chap," he said as he started toward the stable, Comet following like a dog. Even in the stable he found evidences of Mammy's hospitality. Baltie, of *course,* occupied the box stall, but the adjoining one for lesser lights than Mammy's "live stock" held in its porcelain manger a liberal supply of oats for the expected guest. Hadyn Stuyvesant smiled as he saw it.

"The invitation to luncheon extends to you, old chap, you see," he said as he quickly unharnessed his pet. "It's lucky you are cool and able to partake. The little girl in yonder did not let you turn a hair, did she?"

The reply to this remark was a gentle nozzling of the speaker.

"I hope I have not kept you waiting," said Hadyn, as he laid his hat and gloves upon the

hall table, and followed Mrs. Carruth into the cosy dining-room.

"Not a minute. Mammy has just brought in the bouillon. Please sit next to Constance."

At that moment Mammy, a sight to gladden a housewife's eyes, in her print gown, immaculate apron and gay bandana, entered the dining-room bearing a plate of steaming corn-muffins. Placing them upon the table she dropped a courtesy to the guest, saying as she did so:

"Yo' sarvint, Massa Stuyv'sant. I'se proud fer ter see yo', sar."

"How are you, Mammy? I haven't seen you at the Arcade lately. Don't you go down as often?"

"I goes nigh 'bout ev'ry day, sar. On'y I spects I don' jist hit de times yo's dar. Yes sar, I goes ev'ry day. Bis'ness too spry nowadays ter be neglected."

"I'm right glad to hear that. Miss Constance also gave me good reports of it on our way here. She is a sort of public benefactress

to the Arcade. I'll venture to say that the wives, mothers and daughters of the men who have offices in that building were never so well supplied with candy in all their lives, and I believe the novel way in which they can get it, and pay for it is one of the chief attractions for your customers, Miss Constance. Whatever put the thought into your head, anyway?"

"Force of circumstances, principally," laughed Constance. "It was a case of 'nothing venture nothing have,' I reckon. I can't very well be a business woman until I've ceased to be a schoolgirl—at least not a full-fledged one behind a counter. So I had to take some chances."

"Won't you tek jist one mo'?" asked Mammy at this juncture, as she passed a fresh supply of her flaky corn cakes.

Hadyn looked up at her quizzically, as he asked: "Have you kept tally of the number I've already eaten?"

"No, sar. I ain't, but I hopes it's a heap, ef yo' relishes 'em. Dey's right wholesomelike,

dey tells me. Co'n makes *brains* some folks say."

"Mrs. Carruth, would you mind looking out of that window a moment. This is my *fifth,* I'm certain, and feeling your attention withdrawn from me will spare my blushes."

"You eat just as many as you like, Mr. Stuyvesant," broke in Jean. "Mammy made them especially for you; she told me so."

"Is that true, Mammy?" he asked, pausing in the act of taking number five from the plate she held.

" 'Spects it *is,* sar," chuckled Mammy.

"Then here goes. Do please take another, Miss Constance, just to keep me in countenance. I never tasted anything to equal them. George, I wish some good Samaritan would start up a decent lunch counter in South Riveredge! I give you my word, there isn't a place there where a man, woman or child can get even a decent sandwich. The stuff they sell is simply awful. Why, if some one were to open a little luncheon stand right there in the corri-

dor of the Arcade, and sold nothing more than decent bread and butter, sandwiches, cake, pie and coffee, they'd make a fortune in five years. Yes, I'm in dead earnest, you need not smile, Miss Eleanor, you have no idea how we poor mortals are suffering for wholesome food. It's a wonder the whole Arcade is not afflicted with indigestion from the stuff served in those places in South Riveredge."

"Suppose I give up my idea of going to college and open a lunch counter in the Arcade and run opposition to Connie's candy counter," said Eleanor, with an amused laugh at his earnestness.

"And let me help!" cried Jean. "It's vacation now and I could just as well as not. Will you *do* it, Nornie? May I, mother?"

But before Mrs. Carruth could reply to this astounding proposition a dissenting voice arose in emphatic force:

"*Lunch* counter! *Lunch* counter!! For Gawd's sake what we-all a-comin' to. A Blairsdale tendin' a *lunch counter* an' a dolin'

out sanbridges fer any white trash wha' has a dime fer ter pay fer 'em! Miss Jinny! Miss Jinny, lemme smack dat chile good for speakin' up like dat, an' do you try fer ter make Miss Nornie and *dat man* quit a-puttin' such fool notions in her haid," and with this verbal bombshell Mammy caught up her plate of muffins and strode from the room.

CHAPTER V.

A Compact.

For a moment the five individuals at the lunch table looked at each other in amazement, then the funny side of it dawned upon them and the room rang with laughter.

"Now, sir, you *have* done it," cried Constance, wagging a reproving finger at the unwitting cause of domestic discord.

"Why, *what* have I done? *How* have I offended the lady-high-potentate of the establishment?" asked Hadyn, growing momentarily more bewildered.

"You have utterly outraged all her traditions of what a Blairsdale may do and survive to tell of it. Haven't you yet learned that a *Blairsdale* is made of different clay from lesser mortals?" was Mrs. Carruth's question as she wiped from her eyes the tears her laugh had brought there.

"And you have even put into *my* head the possibility of becoming a restaurant keeper, and in Jean's the suggestion of being a *waitress* in one," was Eleanor's reproachful retort, when she could control her laughter.

"Great Scott! Have I done all that? And have I forfeited Mammy's favor for all time? O, I say: This is serious. This will never do. How am I to make my peace with her? Why that means no more corn muffins! It may also mean locked doors against my incoming. It has got to be corrected at once. Come to my rescue forthwith. Show me the way to make my peace."

"I think you will have to leave it in the hands of fate. That is the way we do when Mammy puts on her war paint," was Mrs. Carruth's laughing answer. "Take no notice of her when she comes in with the dessert and she will soon cool down. Her bark is always worse than her bite," concluded Mrs. Carruth, as she rang the little silver bell at her hand.

Mammy would not deign to notice anyone.

She served her dessert in a scrupulous manner and departed. When the meal was ended and they rose from their seats Hadyn said:

"Well, I haven't had such a luncheon as that in many a day, yet there is a sinking here *not* caused by the consumption of *six* corncakes. A weight rests upon my—I can't say soul because *that* is supposed to be located in one's head."

"Don't worry. When you least expect it you will see light and peace will be restored," were Mrs. Carruth's reassuring words. "But let us go out onto the piazza. It is such a perfect day."

"I fear I can't tarry very long. My errand to Riveredge is to see Jean's old friend—or enemy—Raulsbury. It seems he has stirred up the whole neighborhood by agreeing to rent his land to a show which is booked to appear in Riveredge next month. Mr. Fletcher is nearly wild about it, and half a dozen others are on the warpath. I don't know that I can do anything to change his intention further than to try to make him see that he will bring into the neigh-

borhood an extremely undesirable element, yet I doubt if that will influence him in the least. Prove rather a spur than otherwise, perhaps. He was destined to disagree with everybody else, I believe. But dollars mean a good deal to him, and if the neighbors will make good to him the sum which he would receive from this circus—"

"Circus! Circus! Is a circus coming to Riveredge?" cried Jean.

"A circus *is* coming, but we hope it won't take up its stand quite in the heart of the finest residential section," laughed Hadyn, as he put his arm about Jean and drew her to his side.

"Couldn't they go to the same place they used to go to over in South Riveredge?" asked Jean.

"Not very well. The land has been sold and they are already excavating for a building. I dare say that is the reason they hit upon Jabe's fields. They are broad and flat and in the best part of the town."

"What a dog-in-the-manger that man is," exclaimed Mrs. Carruth. "He does absolutely

nothing with his land, yet he will not sell it to those who would improve it, even though they have made him very liberal offers. Mr. Fletcher has resorted to all sorts of fair methods of obtaining it, but it is useless."

"If the circus comes, may I go to it?" begged Jean eagerly.

"Who will take you?"

"Why, Mammy, of course. She'll want to go as much as *I* do. May we?"

"We'll see what Mammy has to say. Perhaps she will be too cross to go," was Mrs. Carruth's amused answer.

"Huh! A fig for *her* crossness," was the confident retort. "I'm *gone!*"

After chatting a little longer Hadyn rose to bid his hostess good-by.

"I'm sorry to be obliged to hurry away, Mrs. Carruth. It has been a delightful little visit for me. May I come again? The hotel at South Riveredge leaves considerable to be desired as to home element, and this little taste you have given me whets my appetite (not for Mammy's

corn muffins) but for the atmosphere in which they were eaten," he said as he held her hand.

"Can't we lend you a little of the home atmosphere for which you seem so hungry, Mr. Stuyvesant? Remember your mother and I were friends during our girlhood, although our ways divided when we married. May I, for her sake, try to share something of the home atmosphere with her boy?"

The voice was very soft and winning, the eyes filled with a sweet, motherly light. Hadyn thought how like Constance's were the words and expression.

"I could never cancel such an obligation, Mrs. Carruth, but I cannot resist placing myself under it. *You* have no idea how intense the Heimweh is at times. Perhaps when I am forty-four, instead of twenty-four I shall have conquered it, but at present it often conquers me."

"Then we must join forces to route it. If you find it overcoming you, catch up your 'phone, call up our number and say just 'Heim-

weh.' We will be on the lookout for you and rise to arms."

The words were lightly spoken, and full of cheeriness, but the look which accompanied them held a depth of meaning which warmed one lonely heart.

With a cheery farewell to Eleanor and Constance, he turned to say good-by to Jean. What prompted the child it would have been hard to explain but without the slightest hesitation she raised her arms, clasped them about Hadyn Stuyvesant's neck and kissed him, saying:

"If you borrow Mother *I'll* be your little sister, won't I? I'd like that, because I love you; you were so good to Baltie that day."

A less self-possessed man than Hadyn might have been embarrassed. Returning the caress very gently he said:

"Had anything been needed to induce me to enter into this compact, you would have supplied it, but it is irrevocably bound now, little

sister! Remember you are to be *that* to me forever-and-a-day."

"I'll remember," was Jean's reply.

"Jean, how could you?" asked Eleanor when Hadyn had gone out to the stable to harness.

"How could I *what?*" said Jean, turning toward Eleanor.

"Take such a liberty with Mr. Stuyvesant. What will he think of you?" Eleanor's tone was one of deep reproach.

For a moment Jean looked at her without seeming to understand wherein lay the offense. Then she cried: "It *wasn't* a liberty, was it, Mother? Why shouldn't I tell him I love him if I *do*. I tell you and Connie and Nornie so, and you like to have me. So I don't see why I shouldn't tell Mr. Stuyvesant too."

"But *he* is a stranger, child. *We* are your own relatives."

"He *isn't* a stranger. Mother knew *his* mother, and we have known him ever since last fall, and we've seen him lots. He *isn't* a stranger, is he, Mother?" persisted Hadyn's

champion. "If you like him and want him to borrow a piece of you it's all right for me to love him, isn't it?" cried Jean, growing much excited in her argument of defense.

Mrs. Carruth drew the little girl gently to her as she answered:

"Sweetheart, there can never be any set rule for our conduct toward our friends. What would seem forward and in questionable taste in one case, would be quite justifiable and permissible in another. Mr. Stuyvesant fully understood *your* impulse, dear, and it meant a great deal to him, I know. He has a wonderfully sweet character and pure soul, and would never misunderstand your affection for him."

"But she ought not to do such a thing again," insisted Eleanor.

Jean whirled around instantly aggressive. Mrs. Carruth laid a gently detaining hand upon the curly head, as she said:

"I shall only ask her never to make her overtures too marked. Circumstances must govern her actions. She is a little girl; Hadyn Stuy-

vesant a lonely man in spite of his more than comfortable circumstances. We would better let the matter rest where it is, Eleanor."

"I've got to go down to Gilbert's stationery store in about half an hour. Would you like to go with me, Honey?" was all Constance said, as she stopped on her way across the piazza to kiss the little face upturned to hers.

Meanwhile, how was it faring with the object of this controversy? When Hadyn reached the stable Mammy stood, arms akimbo, beside the runabout, her face about as expressionless as a carved wooden Indian's. Hadyn's first impulse was to laugh, but bethinking himself in time, he controlled his rebellious eyes and lips, and assuming a most urbane manner, said:

"Why Mammy, I thought you would be busy clearing up after serving such a luncheon as I've just had the pleasure of eating."

"I'se don cl'ared up long 'go. Don't take *me* no hour-n-a' ha'f ter cl'ar up. I was raised by Miss Jinny's *Ma,* an' *she* weren't gwine' ter

have no come-day-go-day niggers 'round *her,*" snapped Mammy.

"It's a great pity the world holds so few like *you,* Mammy," was Hadyn's next conciliatory remark. "You are a real wonder to me. How you accomplish so much in one day is way past *my* understanding."

"Reckon I ain't no sich great wonder as yo' t'inks. Trouble wid most folks is dey takes a heap mo' time a *thinkin'* 'bout doin' dan dey taks fer de *doin'* itse'f, an' minits counts, sar."

"They surely do," agreed Hadyn, as he put the harness on Comet and led him toward the runabout. Mammy instantly raised the shafts, let them drop lightly over the horse's back, and then slipping the tug-strap over it, ran the trace along to the whiffletree in a manner which proved her no novice at harnessing.

"How many turns does yo' make on yo' breachin' strap, sar?" she asked.

"Two, and fourth hole, Mammy," answered Hadyn, greatly amused at Mammy's skill as a groom, though wisely refraining from com-

menting thereupon, and secretly wondering if there was anything upon earth the old woman had not done, or would hesitate to attempt. When all was ready and he was about to step into the runabout, Mammy stepped up to Comet and running her hand along the shining neck, remarked:

"My! but he feel like he made of satin fer suah. Dat's de fines' hawse I eber clap my eyes on. Yes, sar, 'deed he *is*."

"Not many finer. But I'm afraid I've got to hurry along now, Mammy."

"Yes, sar. I 'spects I is 'tainin' you but, but —well dey is sumpin I wants mightily ter ask yo', sar," hesitated Mammy.

"I am sure I shall be very glad to tell you if I am able to do so," replied Hadyn, waiting expectantly.

"Well yo' see, sar, it's gwin' ter tak too long ter 'scuss it right here an' now, but if—if—yo'd let me call at yo' office in de Arcyade next time I goes dar, I wouldn't tek no mo' ob yo' time

dan I hatter, and I reckons yo' could make my min' cl'ar 'bout it."

"Call by all means, Mammy. I'll be there Monday morning and at your service."

"Thank yo' sar. Thank yo' kindly," said Mammy, her good nature quite restored, as she dropped her best courtesy to him.

"Wonder what is simmering in the old woman's mind now," thought Hadyn as he drove off.

CHAPTER VI.

Mammy's Scheme.

Hadyn Stuyvesant's office was on the fourth floor of the Arcade Building in South Riveredge, the business center of all the Riveredges, which township consisted of no less than four: Riveredge, the section restricted to residences; South Riveredge, the business center; East Riveredge, a quarter in which factories of various kinds had sprung up, developing a lively manufacturing center. North Riveredge, really a suburb of Riveredge proper, was still an undeveloped section of the township, although bidding fair to become one of its most beautiful ones since it lay all along the river front and commanded a water view up and down for miles. Within the past two years a corporation had been formed by some of the wealthiest, most influential men of Riveredge, and prominent New York business men, and practically

the entire river front bought up, as well as many acres back from the water, thus giving them control of nearly all the desirable land in that section. A widely-known firm of landscape architects was now in charge of the development of this land, and it was rapidly assuming a park-like appearance which bid fair to make it one of the most beautiful places on the river.

Hadyn Stuyvesant was secretary of this company, and was very deeply interested in its success, for most of his own property inherited from his mother lay in one of its most desirable localities.

As he sat dictating a letter to his stenographer the Monday following his visit at Mrs. Carruth's home there came a tap upon his office door.

"Come in," he called.

The door opened and Mammy stood upon the threshold bobbing a courtesy and saying:

"Sarvint, Massa Sutyv'sant."

"Why how are you, Mammy? Come right

in; I've been expecting you. Miss Gordon, we will continue this later," he said courteously to the sweet-looking girl seated near his desk, pencil and notebook in hand. "Please copy the letter I have already dictated."

"Very well, Mr. Stuyvesant," was the quiet, dignified reply of the young girl as she gathered up her papers and withdrew to the adjoining office, where presently the clicking of her machine attested to her industry.

"Well, Mammy, what can I do for you?" asked Hadyn briskly, as he placed a chair for the old colored woman.

She hesitated a moment, then took it, saying:

" 'Spec's I better had set down, fer I 'clar dat histin' machine yonder lak ter tu'n ma haid hinside-to, it done yanks a body froo de air so fas'. My, but I'se a-twillerin' 'roun' an' 'roun' fer all de worl' lak a spinnin' turtle," and Mammy raised both hands to her head as though endeavoring to assure herself that it still rested upon her shoulders, then lapsed for a moment

into retrospection. Hadyn did not speak. With a start she recovered herself.

"La! Guess I'se gettin' 'crepid. Sittin' here a-studyin' when I oughter say my say an' git out. Ax yo' pardon, sah."

"No harm done, Mammy. But how can I serve you?"

"Hum, um. Yas, sah. I may be nuffin' but an ol' fool, but what yo' said las' *Sattiddy* when yo' teken' lunch wid we-all—Huh! yo' shore *did* lak dem muffins," she chuckled, "just sort o' set me a studyin'. My Lawd, ef de hull fambly startin' out fer ter be bis'ness women jes' lak' all de new-fangled young ladies up Norf here, what t'inks dey's gotter earn dey livin's, spec's it's high time *I* gits a-hustlin' too. 'Spec' I'se *gotter* lessen I want ter see two mo' o' ole Massa's gran'chillern a-settin' up counters. Huh! a Blairsdale a-settin' up a *lunch* counter! Name o' Gawd, what we-all comin' to!" and Mammy fairly wrung her hands in desperation at such a scandalous possibility.

"They were only teasing you, Mammy," said

Hadyn, seeing the old woman's distress was very real.

"Teasin' me! Teasin' me! Huh! Yo' don' *know* dem chillern. I *does*. An' I knows dat dey ain' gwine ter be stopped by nothin' short of an earthquake ef dey gets a notion in dey haids. No-sah-ee! If dey gits de idee dat dey can he'p dey Ma by settin' up a lunch counter hyer in de Arcyade, I bait dar ain' nothin' in de roun' worl' gwine stop 'em. No sah! De onliest way fer ter do *dat* is ter hab a lunch counter right *here on de spot* befo' dey very eyes. When dey *sees* one here-a-reddy dat'll settle it. Nuffin' else would dough," was Mammy's emphatic assertion. "Yas, sah," she resumed, "an' I'se jist natchelly gotter put a stop ter sich notions right off, an' dat's what I'se here fer ter talk 'bout. Now, sah, please he'p me sah, kase I'se powerful upset in my min'. Does yo' suah 'nuf b'lieve a counter would be—would do good bis'ness hyer?"

Mammy leaned forward, peering earnestly into Hadyn's face as she asked this question.

"If run by the right sort of person, Mammy, he would make a mighty good thing out of it, but I entirely agree with you that it would be no place for Mrs. Carruth's daughters. It would be a very different proposition from Miss Constance's candy booth. But I do not think you need feel any apprehension; they would never think of venturing upon such an undertaking. They are too dignified and well-bred."

"Dat's jist hit!" broke in Mammy. "Dey's so well-bred and dignumfied dat dey don' spec' anybody else gwine be de *odder* kyind. Dey ain' know dey *is* any odder kyind. But if dey goes on as dey's begun, dey's gwine fin' it out wid a bang some day. Miss Constance on de cl'ar, straight road right now."

Hadyn looked puzzled. Mammy nodded and continued: "Yas, sah, I knows what I'se talkin' 'bout. Befo' I don' got yanked up hyer I stop at de boof fer ter set t'ings straight, an' I'se got eyes all roun' my haid, *I* has. Den, Rastus, *he* come an' talk wid me 'bout five minutes an' *he*

ain' no fool neider. Yas, sah, Miss Connie on de fa'r straight pike to get knowledge ef she spen' many hours in dat boof, *an' I ain' a-gwine let her.* No, sah, I ain'!" ended Mammy with a wag of her head that boded ill for those who sought to out-wit her.

Suspecting but not feeling quite sure of Mammy's secret of unrest, Hadyn thought it wiser to keep silent.

"Now, sah. Please sah, will you tell me how anybody aimin' fer ter have a lunch counter right hyer in de Arcyade better had set 'bout fixin' it up?"

"The first thing would be to learn which sections on the lower floor would be available, then ask the Superintendent's permission to open such a place."

"Is dat Mistah Po'tah?" asked Mammy.

"Yes. He could tell you all about it. But tell me first; are you really serious about this, Mammy? Have you any such idea?"

"Yes, sah, I *has.* Fust an' fo'most if *I* doesn't do it, I'll bait yo' my haid dat dem chil-

lern *will.* An' secon' an' hin' mos' I'se sort o' got a notion dat hit's de very livin' cut-an-dried plan fer me ter mak a heap o' cyash."

"But why do you need so much at your age, Mammy? Mrs. Carruth has told me that you have already saved considerable."

"Hum. Yas, sah. I'se got quite a stockin' full, an' dat's de truf, but, well I spec's I hatter ax yo' ter 'cuse me fer not tellin' yo' *jist* why, Massa Stuyv'sant," and Mammy picked at the fringe of her cape in a most embarrassed manner.

"I beg your pardon, Mammy. I do indeed. I had no intention of being over-curious. It was only my interest in your welfare that prompted my question," Hadyn hastened to assure the old woman.

"I knows *dat,* sah! I knows *dat.* Lawd bress yo', I ain' got no better frien' in de hull worl' dan yo'. I tell yo' *some* day, mebbe. But not yit. When de right *time* come, sah. I'se studyin' 'bout some *odder* time, I is."

"Very well, Mammy, if my suggestions are

any help you are more than welcome to them. So if you seriously wish to look into the matter let me take you to Mr. Porter's office and we will have a talk with him."

"I hates fer ter give yo' so much trebble, sah," said Mammy as she rose to follow him.

"It is no trouble at all. Just a pleasure. Perhaps some day you will be able to do me a good turn and then we'll be quits, don't you see?"

A few moments later they were sitting in Mr. Porter's office, and he was listening with flattering interest to Hadyn's explanation of the visit and Mammy's scheme, greatly amused at her frequent interpolations, although wisely concealing that fact. Mammy had been a source of much amusement to him ever since her first appearance at the Arcade the previous winter when Constance opened her candy booth.

After the plan had been duly discussed Mr. Porter proposed that they descend from the ninth to the first floor and see what space could

be made available to their needs. When the elevator came up in response to his summons, Mammy exclaimed:

"Bress de Lawd, had I gotter git inter dat ar cage agin? It mighty nigh lak ter shook me foolish when I kem up. Say, yo' boy! Yo' go slow dis hyer time! Yo' hyar me? Massa Stuyv'sant, please sah, mak dat nigger-boy run dis hyer cage lak yo' say Rastus kin."

The smile which this expostulation evoked was general, with the exception of the mulatto boy upon whom Mammy's eyes rested. *He* realized what he was dealing with. He had a *sure enough* Mammy at home.

"Go slowly, Joe," warned Mr. Porter as Mammy stepped gingerly into the elevator and laying hold one side with both hands, held fast as though her safety depended thereon. The descent was less terrifying, however, and when she stepped out upon the tiles of the main corridor she remarked:

"If I had a-known he could a-run dat mashine dat-a-way I bait he would n' never a

hiked me up to de fo'th floor lak he did. I'd a bus' his haid 'fo' I let him."

The ensuing hour was spent in inspecting some of the little open-arched sections of the arcade. It was divided into several about twenty feet square looking out upon the long corridor which ran straight through the building to the rear street. Two of these had recently been vacated. One was next the cigar stand. It was here that Mammy came to a decided halt.

"Dis hyer 's de ve'y livin' cryin' spot fer de speculatiom, sah. Tain' no use fer ter look furder if dis hyer space is fer rent. *Dar's* de segyar place wha' de men-folks gwin' ter hike fer de very livin' minit dey's out'en dey offices. Den dey sees ma pies an' ma cakes, an' smell ma' coffee, an' bress Gawd, dey mouves gwine water des lak ol' Duke's did when he ketch scent ob a rabbit down home. Yah! I ketches dem by dey noses fust, den I fills dey stummicks. *Den* dey kin smoke if dey wantter, but I bait you dey never does spen' a cent fo' dey

seygars twell dey fa'r loaded up wid my stuff. No-siree! Dey won't. Now we talks bis'ness please, Massa Po'tah."

It was nearly twelve o'clock when Mammy left the Arcade. On her way out she met Rastus on his way to relieve Joe at the elevator. She stopped short as though a brilliant idea had struck her, and entered into such an affable conversation with the old man that his head was nearly turned, for he admired Mammy immensely. Just as she was leaving she utterly overwhelmed him by asking:

"I spec's yo' evenings is mos'ly engaged, Mistah Brown. I spec's yo' ain' got time to call 'pon yo' friens?"

"No'm! No'm! dey ain'. Ma evenin's is 'tirely free; 'tirely free. I'se flattered dat yo' ax's. I hope yo's home an' desemgaged, Mrs. Blairsdale. I hopes yo' *is.*"

"*Ma* time's ma *own,*" was Mammy's high and mighty retort as she moved majestically away. When beyond earshot she muttered: "My Lawd, I 'spec' I'se done it fer fa'r *dis*

time. Well, 'might as well be kilt fer a sheep as a goat, but tain't no use fer ter try ter run dis yer lunch counter 'dout a *pa'tner.*"

CHAPTER VII.

The Scheme Simmering.

When Mammy reached home at 12.30 she sailed majestically into her kitchen, removed her hat and cape, hung them carefully upon a hook in her sweeping closet, adjusted her turban and tied about her ample person a snowy apron. Over this was placed a gingham one which could be whisked off at a second's notice. Then she sat about preparing luncheon, her face absolutely inscrutable and giving no sign whatever of the scenes through which she had just passed. Mammy was never hurried, yet she managed to accomplish in the course of a single day as much work as three ordinary people. Mrs. Carruth never dictated, never interfered. Had she done so the old woman would have been utterly demoralized. By letting her absolutely alone everything was

done on time, nothing ever neglected or slighted.

As Mammy placed her scrupulous saucepans upon her range, Constance came in to ask:

"What are we to have for luncheon, Mammy? What dishes do you want?" For Constance always laid the luncheon table when free from school duties, Eleanor's duty being breakfast; Jean's the dinner table.

"Col' chicken, rice croquettes, French-fried pertaters, lettuce salad, pan biskits, and straw-ber'ies," rattled off Mammy.

"Um! Doesn't that sound good though," cried Constance as she whisked back into the butler's pantry to place within Mammy's reach the china needed to serve the dishes named, then returned to the dining-room to lay the dainty table.

Promptly at 1.30, the luncheon hour, the tempting meal was served. No fuss, no confusion in spite of the fact that the presiding genius of the kitchen had been absent from her realm the entire morning.

"Yo' gwine need me dis arternoon, Miss Jinny?" asked Mammy when the meal was over.

"No, Mammy. Why do you ask?"

"Well yo' know I'se been a gallavantin' all de endurin' mawnin' an' dar's de hull week's wash jist a-hollerin' at me. Oughter a-been done dish yer mawnin' but—well 'm I hatter go down to Souf Riveraige on 'portant bis'ness."

"Did you get it all settled, Mammy?" asked Mrs. Carruth seriously.

"Well 'm, I done settle de pra'lim'narys, but de solid, rock-bottom ain' settled yit. Spec' it will be 'fo' long dough."

"How is my booth flourishing, Mammy?" questioned Constance.

"Spic' an' span as yo' please. Has you done made yo' candy fo' tomorrer? Kase dey ain't no great stock on han'. I clar, de way folks runs arter dat sweet stuff is sure 'nuff 'sprisin! An' Rastus he sutteny has got de hang of settin' dem boxes up purty. He has, fer a fac'."

"He's just an old dear, Mammy. I want to

give him something extra nice for his trouble. The dollar a week I pay him seems so absurdly small."

"Hush yo' talk, chile. Dat dollar 's all it's wuth. What in de roun' worl' do he do but jist lif' de little boxes outen de big one an' lay 'em in de case? It ain' tek him five minits a day," was Mammy's protest.

"Yes, the candy is all ready but the packing," said Constance, thinking it wise to avoid an argument on the subject of old Rastus' merits.

"Dat's good. Miss Nornie, when yo' finish yo' lunch, please, ma'am, come out to de kitchen a minit; I got sumpin' I pintedly wants to ax yo'."

"What's up Mammy? Old Baltie sick?" asked Eleanor, for Baltie had been more or less of a thorn in Eleanor's flesh ever since he was adopted by Mammy. She was extremely sensitive to ridicule and felt that the blind old horse, harnessed to the antiquated phaeton, and driven by Mammy with Jean perched upon

the rumble, was an object of mirth to their neighbors.

"Well, if *dat* was de case do yo' spec' I'd ax *yo'* ter he'p tend him?" was Mammy's telling shot, for she neither took nor permitted liberties at the hands of her Miss Jinny's children.

Eleanor had the grace to color, although she turned it off by saying:

"I'll be with you in a little while, Mammy."

The house occupied by the Carruths had once belonged to Hadyn Stuyvesant's mother, and was now owned by him. The grounds ran through to the rear street, and close to it stood the stable and a small building which had once been occupied by Mrs. Stuyvesant's servants, she having the Southern-born woman's aversion to her help being housed beneath her own roof. So the little cabin, as it was called, had been built for Caleb and his wife, Mary, and there they had lived until the death of Hadyn's father, when his mother, utterly crushed by her husband's loss, went abroad and never returned. It was a neat little house

with two rooms on the ground floor, and two on the second. For many years it had been used as a storage place for odds and ends, and now held many articles saved from the Carruth's old home.

It was to this cabin that Mammy led the way when Eleanor went out to the kitchen an hour later.

"What in this world are you scheming now, Mammy?" was the girl's mystified question as Mammy drew a key from her pocket and opened the door.

"What yo' spec' it gwine cost fer ter mak dis hyer place fitten ter live in?" was Mammy's irrelevant reply.

"To *live* in?" echoed Eleanor, looking at the old woman.

"Yas 'm. Dat's what I ax yo'." Mammy's tone forbade unnecessary comment.

"My stars! How should *I* know? It's in a frightful state now, and piled *full* of all manner of stuff."

"I'll tek kyer ob de *stuff*. Dat's no count

'tall. What I want ter find out is, what it gwine ter cost ter mak' dis hyer place fitten fer folks ter *live* in."

"Live in, Mammy? Why who is there *to* live in it? Mother would never allow anyone to live here."

"Huh! How yo' know so much? Mebbe *I* knows a t'ing or two mo'. Now kin yo' tell me what I wantter know or cyant yo'?"

"I'm afraid I don't know very much about such things, Mammy, but I remember what it cost when our rooms were papered and painted and I am sure it would be much less than that. I think about thirty-five dollars would fix up this little place."

"Uh, m-m! Jes' so. Den fifty dollars would shore 'nuf fix it up, wouldn't it?"

Eleanor looked at Mammy as though she fancied she had taken leave of her senses.

"Yo' tink I'se gone clar crazy? Well I ain'. I knows *jist* 'zactly what I'se talkin' bout. Now come 'long back," and Mammy whirled about and started for the house.

The long rays of the setting sun were flooding the land. The early dinner was ended. Mammy had cleared away and was now on her way to perform her nightly duties for her pet, Old Baltie, the blind horse rescued by Jean the previous autumn, and since cared for by her and Mammy, the latter regarding him as her special property. As she strode across the lawn in the direction of the stable she was overtaken by Jean, who clasped the old woman's hand and proceeded to bound and jump along at her side in a manner calculated to upset her equilibrium.

"Fo' de Lawd's sake, chile, is yo' aimin' ter tip me over?"

"No, I'm aimin' to get you to do what I want you to. I want to go to the circus next Saturday and it's no use asking Mother or Nornie or Constance to take me 'cause they won't."

"Cou'se dey won't! I'd lak ter see ma Miss Jinny gwine to a circus, an' yo' know tain' no place for de yether chillern. A circus! Whar it gwine be at?"

Jean knew Mammy well enough to interpret pretty correctly the tone in which the question was asked and the expression which came into her eyes. There were not so many years dividing these two after all. Mammy belonged to the child race and in some respects would forever remain a child at heart: Jean to the race which puts old heads upon young shoulders.

"Over on Jabe Raulsbury's lots. He's rented them to the show in spite of all Mr. Stuyvesant said to him. You know he tried to keep him from letting a circus come right in this pretty part of Riveredge, but he couldn't. I went up to see Amy this morning and she says her father's most crazy about it, but I think it would be lots of fun to have one right next door. Just think of being able to see all the animals and hear the music and—and—" the multiplicity of delights overwhelming her, Jean ceased.

Mammy was lost in thought, and entering the barn went about her duties of feeding, watering and bedding down her charge in a

purely mechanical manner, her mind upon other matters. Baltie, however, was not exacting, and if Mammy's preoccupation caused him to miss her usual affectionate demonstrations and words, Jean supplied the lack and petted the faithful old creature to the point when his response to it became positively foolish.

"When dish yer circus a-comin'?" demanded Mammy.

"It will be here next Saturday. They are going to have a parade in the morning and a show in the afternoon and evening, and then they're going up to Tarriance. I want to go in the afternoon; will you take me?"

"Afternoon? Hum! Dat's a ha'f holiday, ain' it?"

"Yes, but what's *that* got to do with it? We haven't got to think about half holidays," insisted Jean.

"Ain' we, dough? What yo' know 'bout it?"

"Oh, fiddlesticks! *Will* you take me? If I say you will, Mother won't say a word."

"Tell's yo' de day arter to-morrer. No, yo' need 'n' ter pester me, fer 'taint gwine do no good. I'se gotter settle a 'portant matter in my min' an' it cyant be settle' twell den. So quit a teasin'. Circus? My, I ain' been to a circus in a long time."

Jean cast a shrewd glance out of the corners of her eyes, but Mammy was giving the last toss and pat to Baltie's straw, the autumn leaves gathered during the previous fall for his bedding having long since been used up.

"I'm going to ask mother anyway," she cried as she turned to leave the stable.

"Yo'd better not. Yo'd better wait twell *I* 'cides de question," was the warning called after her by Mammy.

Sunset had given place to twilight, twilight to dusk during the time Mammy and Jean were ministering to Baltie, and now as Jean ran across the grounds certain portions of them sheltered by thick foliage were quite dark. At a sudden turn Jean's flight was interrupted by the sudden appearance of a dark figure. She

was running too fast to stop quickly and the inevitable happened. She and the advancing figure came into violent collision and the figure sat down with extreme dispatch as it demanded:

"Bress Gawd! What I don' struck?" Had it asked: "What done struck me," it would have been more to the point, as Jean executing a sort of pirouette dropped upon the soft grass, gasping out:

"H—Hullo, Rastus? Where did *you* come from this time of day—no night?"

The figure began to rise with great deliberation, meanwhile muttering:

"Des look at me! Des *look* at me! Spec' I *is* a sight fer suah. All dish yer yerth and dirt on ma bes' clo'es, an' me comin' fer ter call on a lady. Lawd bress ma soul!"

It had often been said that Mammy was ubiquitous. She proved it in this instance. Barely two minutes had elapsed since Jean rushed from the stable, yet Mammy now towered above her and her wrath was superb.

"Yo' chile! Yo' git up f'om dat grass plot whar yo' settin' an' yo' go roun' whar yo' *Ma* at, an' yo' *stay* whar yo' Ma at. An' if I ketch yo' out o' yo' baid one minit atter de clock done struck de nine an' a half, yo' gwine get sumpin yo' ain' get sense yo' was toted 'roun in ma arms. Now go!"

It took a good deal to quell Jean but she never disputed Mammy in her present mood. Scrambling to her feet she fled.

"I axes yo' pardon fo' yo' 'ception, Mr. Brown. Dat chile sartin is disturb yo' ekker-lib'um, sar. I hopes yo' 'scuses her. Please, sah, ter foller me inter ma settin' room."

Majesty itself was in Mammy's walk as she led the way to her "settin' room," the immaculate kitchen porch.

CHAPTER VIII.

An African Romance.

"Please, sah, Mr. Brown, tek a seat," said Mammy, pushing toward her guest a "hickory" rocker with most inviting green baise cushions; a chair brought from her own old cabin in the South, the cushions having been made and covered by Mrs. Carruth's mother. Mammy valued that chair above all others, for not only her "Miss Jinny," but all of Miss Jinny's children had been sent "byelow" upon her ample bosom as she swayed back and forth in it. The guest to whom that chair was offered would do well to appreciate his privileges.

Rastus bent his head in acknowledgment of the courtesy, stroked the inviting cushions admiringly, and then began to lower himself upon them with the deliberation and uncertainty of old age—for Rastus would never again see

seventy—saying, when he was finally settled in its comfortable depths:

"Ho—um! Dis yer cheer suttiny *do* fit de spots whar de rheumatiz is been a-touchin' me up dis spring."

"Is yo' flicted wid de rumatics?" asked his hostess solicitously as she took her seat beside him, her own chair being one of the ordinary ones from her kitchen.

"Yas 'm, I *is,*" admitted Rastus. "I sartin *is,*" and he rubbed one shoulder ruefully.

"I 'plore hearin' yo' sesso. I shorely does. It's a deep 'fliction. Well, sah, yo' shorely mus' let me ascribe fo' yo'. I's a master han' at ascribin'."

"Is yo' now really?" asked Rastus eagerly. "Well, well, my wife Ruby used ter be mighty pert at such doins, but I ain't had no one fer ter t'ink 'bout me an' my mis'rys fo' dese many years. No'm, I ain' fer a fac'," and the old man wagged his head solemnly, then looked off into the darkness.

Mammy sat silent also. Presently she asked:

"Does yo' ever 'dulge in terbacca?"

Rastus came back from his meditations with a start.

"Wa—wa—yas 'm; I does 'casionally. I fin's ma pipe a gre't com'solatiom when I'se sort o' low in ma min'."

Mammy made no reply but rising from her seat entered her kitchen and presently returned with two corncob pipes and a pouch of tobacco. Carefully filling both pipes with such a practiced hand as to prove her no novice, she handed one to her visitor, then striking a match, held it to his bowl.

"Hum! Um! Des so! Dat's de Simon pure stuff fer suah!" murmured Rastus ecstatically, as he drew in long whiffs of the fragrant tobacco, for it must be confessed that Mammy was a connoisseur. Mammy then proceeded to light her own pipe and for a few moments the silence was unbroken by these two old colored people, miles away from their homes, without a rela-

tive on earth, so far as either knew, each creeping, creeping, creeping, as day followed day, toward the end of a long life, spent in devoted service to those who, for the greater portion of each of their lives, had owned them body and soul. Of the two, Mammy's condition was the happier, for she still had her white folks whom she loved past understanding, and who loved the old colored woman as only the children of the South *can* love their Mammy, however much they may tyrannize over her.

But Rastus was absolutely alone in the world. In the flotsam and jetsam of the so-called "Reconstruction period" after the war, a radical "reconstruction" for many, he had drifted North and finally come to a precarious anchorage in the Arcade, utterly and entirely alone in the world.

Presently, over in the east, toward which the porch faced, a great round summer moon, a perfect "June moon" rose from behind the trees and hung as a background for the wreaths of smoke rising from the old people's

pipes; wreaths that rose lazily, luxuriously, comfortably, as though typifying their present condition of peace and content.

"Hum; um;" murmured Rastus again, watching them as they mingled and floated away upon the soft night air. "Um, dat smoke's mighty soci'ble. Mighty. Ef smoke could talk now I wunner what *dem* two wreafs would say?"

"Reckon dey'd say dey settin' a good 'xample o' *friendliness,*" answered Mammy significantly. "Reckon dey would." Mammy was looking straight at the moon. Rastus cast a quick glance in her direction but her expression was entirely noncommittal. Presently he remarked, apparently apropos of nothing: "Taint easy fer ter bre'k away from old ties. No'm, taint."

"Is yo' t'inkin' ob tekin' a journey?" asked Mammy innocently.

"Oh, no'm! No'm, I *isn't.* I was jis a-studyin'; jis a-studyin'. Is *yo'* ever thought

ob makin' a change? Ob sort o' restin' f'm yo' long labors, ma'am?"

"Reckon de day *I* sets out ter res' f'om ma labors gwine ter be de day I sets out ter *die,*" was Mammy's startling reply. "No-sir-ee, *I* ain' a-studyin' 'bout res'in' fo'm ma labors jis yit; I'se studyin' 'bout settin' out fer ter tek up a few *mo'*. Isn't yo' hyar I done rint a arch in de Arcyade?"

Mammy fired this bomb with unerring aim.

"Bress Gawd!" cried Rastus, turning suddenly to peer into the old woman's face as though he doubted the evidences of his hearing. Mammy's satisfaction was extreme as she nodded and said:

"Yas sah, I *has.* I'se gwine ter set up a lunch counter dar. I done insulted wid Massa Stuyv'sant, an' Massa Po'tah dis yer mawnin' and de hull matter is pretty nigh fix up. Dey's jist one or two pints dat keep me a-studyin' dough. Jist one or two."

Mammy had not lived all her years without understanding human nature pretty well, and

the masculine portion of it exceptionally well. Rastus swallowed the bait whole.

"I'se pintedly intresed. I shorely *is,* an' if I kin be ob sarvice, Mrs. Blairsdale, I hopes yo' ain' gwine hes'tate ter call 'pon me. I craves fer ter aid yo'. I does 'ndeed."

"Well, sar, yo' see I'se mighty 'vided in my min'. Here's all ma white folks, an' cou'se, I jist natchally cyant let dem want fo' nuttin'. On de yether han', dar's de bes' chance ever was hear tel ob jist a hollerin' out loud fer ter be tooken up. I kin make de stuff—Lawd, anybody wid fingers on dey han's and sense in dey haids, kin do *dat,* but—who gwine run *dat counter dat I kin trus?* Dat ain' gwine stuff deysefs ter de fair bustin' pint wid all de pies an' de cakes, an' de coffee what I sen's dar? *Dat's* what *I'se* axin', and dar ain' anybody a-answerin' *dat* question dat *I* kin see. No, sah, dey *ain',"* and Mammy wagged her head dubiously.

Everything indicated that Rastus' chair had been designed for comfort, but his actions cer-

tainly belied the indication. He squirmed and twisted as though he were sitting upon a bed of nettles. His hostess was quite oblivious of his agitation.

"Yas, sah," she resumed after a significant pause, "dat's de rock on which dis hyar speculatiom gwin' split wide open if I ain' tek keer. What *I* needs, and needs mighty bad right off, is a suah-'nuf pa'tner: a pa'tner what I kin *trus'*, kase if *he* ain' watchin' out an' takin' cyer ob t'ings de hull *shee*bang bus' up too, an' *he* boun' ter go sky-high long wid it."

Mammy's logic was certainly incontrovertible. Rastus' pipe had long since gone out. He was lost to a pipe's seductions. Presently he began to speak, if a series of gasps and contortions ending in unintelligible stutters and stammers could be so designated.

"Mi-Mi-Mis Bl-Bl-Bl-Blairsdale; Mi-Mis Blairsdale, wha'-wha' yo' tellin' me yo' a-needin'? A-a pat'ner? A sho' 'nuf pat'ner? Wh', wh' Mis Bl-Blairsdale, I knows I ain't jist nuffin' in de worl' but jist a 'crepid ol' man.

No'm, jist nuffin in de worl', but ma'am I'se, I'se been a-studyin' 'bout yo' eber sense I fust don sot ma eyes pon yo' dar in de 'cade las' winter. Yas'm, I *is.* I'se been a-studyin' *pintedly* an' I suttiny does 'mire yo' mo'n any lady I'se met sense I done los' ma wife Ruby. I suttiny *does.* An', an' Mi-Mis Blairsdale, ef yo' craves a *pat'ner I, I* shorely would feel mighty honored—mighty honored ef yo' would let *me* 'spire to be—to be *not* yo' *bis'ness* pat'ner, but yo' pat'ner fo', fo' *life.* Yo' pat'ner for de res' ob de time we has fer ter trabbel long dis hyer vale ob tears—No'm, no'm, I doesn't 'xactly mean *dat* m'! No'm I *doesn't.* Gawd bress ma soul! wha' fer I talkin' 'bout tears? I 'clar I'se des fergettin'. No'm, I means dis yer vale ob *smiles.* Yas'm, *dat's* what I means. An' ef yo' kin bring yo'sef ter 'sider my p'osal, I b'lieves we—yo' an' me, I suttiny does b'lieve we kin, we kin, we kin be happy. Yas'm, I does, an' Gawd knows I craves fer ter mak' yo' so, honey. I does fer a fac'. I'se a lonely ol' man,

Honey, a lonely ol' man, an', an' I hasn't many mo' years fer ter trabbel long dis yer road. Won' yo' jist walk long side o' me?"

Rastus' voice had broken as he came to the end of his importunity, and his pipe lay upon the floor at his feet utterly forgotten as he reached to take Mammy's hands. Poor hands! They bore testimony to many years' service. Rastus' were gnarled and drawn from rheumatism until they bore little resemblance to human hands. Mammy's were work-hardened and horny.

Forty-seven years had passed since Mammy had heard such words spoken. She was then a handsome young woman of eighteen, her "ole Miss Jinny's" maid. Neat, deft and the belle of the plantation. It was shortly before the war began when Charles Devon, belonging to the owner of a plantation in an adjoining county, first saw her. It was a large plantation, larger far than Mammy's master's, and hundreds of slaves called its owner master. Charles and Mammy met at a camp meeting

and it was a case of love at first sight. Permission was finally obtained and they were married. Mammy was then known by the name of Lutie Boliver, having been born on the plantation shortly after her mother, Esther Boliver, was bought by Mr. Blairsdale at a sale in Atlanta. Charles Devon and Lutie Boliver became husband and wife and met when they could. Mr. Blairsdale offered to buy Charles but his master had no wish to sell so valuable a servant, and within two months, at the breaking out of the war, Charles went with him to the front. Lutie never saw her young husband again. Her baby, born at the same time her "Miss Jinny" came, died before it was a year old. Mammy nursed her white baby and loved it as only a bereaved mother can love the little one which is placed in her care when her own baby has been taken from her.

In the course of time Mammy was again married to one of the Blairsdale servants and became Mammy Blairsdale. She had almost

forgotten that she had ever had any other name than "Mammy." Lutie was never heard. Mammy never had any other children.

All this was passing through the old woman's mind as she sat there, and the scenes were as vivid as though the events had taken place but the day before. She saw the old camp-meeting ground, the people who had gathered there from far and near, coming in every conceivable sort of vehicle, or walking many miles. Saw the gray-haired old minister in his pulpit made of a huge packing case, saw the gallant young buck beside her, arrayed in his master's cast-off finery, tall, handsome, debonair.

"Ain' yo' gwine speak to me, Honey?" Rastus' voice was singularly soft and musical for an old man. Mammy started. What was there in its ring which recalled earlier days so vividly? Turning to him she asked:

"Did yo' tell me yo' was borned on Glen Devon?" naming the estate of the friend of her old master.

"Yas, Honey, I was. I was borned an' raised

dar, an' never did get to go off it fer ter stay twell I went to de wah wid my master."

Mammy started.

"Yo' went wid Massa Stark? Den huccum yo' name is Rastus Brown? De man wa' went to de wah wid Massa Stark done name *Charles Devon.*"

"Dat was *ma* name *den,* Honey. Ma master was killed an' I was ketched an' cyarried off ter Kansas, an' I ain' never is git back home no mo'. Ma new Massa he change ma name ter Rastus Brown, den *he* git kill fo' long, too, an' den I goes ter wo'k at Fo't Scott. Den I goes wid de troops out ter Fo't Wo'th, an' den kem de een o' de wah an' I ain' got no Massa, no home, no wife—nuffin left. One day long come one ob de Glen Devon niggers an' *he* tell me eb'ry t'ing gonter smash. I ax him 'bout ebrybody, ebyrt'ing, an' he tell me de plantatiom in ruins an' de hull 'state jis' natchelly tore up. I ax him—I ax him 'bout ma, ma wife, honey, kase I'd been mar'ied jist befo' de wah bus out, an', an', he say de Blairsdales

all done move way fo'm de plantatiom an' he ain' know whar dey gone at. I never *is* see ma little wife again, honey. She weren't nottin' in de worl' but a chile when we mar'ied. Nottin' but a little chile like Miss Constance in yander. An' poorty! Gawd bless her, she were de purtis' leetle creeter I ever *is* set ma eyes on. Dat's fo'ty-seben year ago. I'se an' ole man, honey, an' ole man. Cyant yo' keer fo' me jist a leetle, honey?"

"Was her name Lutie?" asked Mammy under her breath.

"Yas'm. Yas'm," cried Rastus eagerly. "*Is yo'* know her? Fo' Gawd's sake tell me wha' beccum ob her ef yo' know."

Rastus had again clasped Mammy's hands and was peering into her face.

"She went wid ole Mistis down inter Alabama where Massa own some lan' an' whar de fightin' weren' so hot. Miss Jinny was borned down dar when de turmoil was de wust, an', an' Lutie's baby done come five days befo'."

"Lutie's baby! Lutie's baby! Ma Gawd! Lutie's baby!"

Mammy nodded.

"Did it live? Wha' it at now?" implored Rastus.

"In Hebben," said Mammy, reverently.

Rastus' head fell upon his hands. Mammy continued:

"Lutie nussed Miss Jinny's baby—dat's *ma* Miss Jinny in yander, an' she love her lak her own. Is yo' member how Lutie love chillern? Is yo' member how she got de eend ob her little finger cut off de day she save Miss Jinny's little brudder f'om gittin' his han' cut off in de hay cutter?"

"I sho' does. I was *dar*. I done kem ober wid Massa Stark. I sho' do. It mos' kill me dat day."

For answer Mammy held up her left hand between Rastus and the great golden moon. The old black hand was a perfect silhouette. Two joints of the little finger were gone.

The old man's piteous cry of "Lutie! Lutie!

Ma Gawd! Ma Gawd! Ma little Lutie!" brought Mrs. Carruth hurrying out upon the back porch.

Rastus was upon his knees, his head in his old wife's lap, sobs choking him as he thanked God for the blessing which had come to him.

CHAPTER IX.

Mammy's Wedding Present.

Yes, it was all true. The old couple, parted as had been hundreds and hundreds of others when the terrible conflict between North and South tore asunder the holiest bonds, and scattered far and wide the white as well as the colored race, had thus strangely drifted together again, guided, as Rastus reverently put it, "straight togedder by de han' ob de Lawd."

During their intercourse since their meeting the previous winter Mammy had said very little of her former master or his home, her pride restraining her from confessing that the old home could no longer boast its early glories. She had told Rastus that she was a Blairsdale; nothing could ever dim the luster of the *name,* and that her Miss Jinny had been a Blairsdale prior to her marriage; that her old master was dead and the plantation sold,

but she had never gone into further details regarding her early home or personal matters. Rastus had concluded without any great amount of deep reasoning that Mammy was simply one of the slaves born on the Blairsdale plantation who had come North with the family, a very natural conclusion since her name conveyed nothing more to him, nor his to her, and forty-seven years is nearly half a century. Outlines grow indistinct when looked back upon from such a retrospection.

When Rastus grew calmer Mrs. Carruth talked long and earnestly with the old couple, and the hours so spent held for her both joy and sorrow.

Constance came out to learn what was going on and was told the wonderful news and bidden bring Eleanor and Jean, who came with all speed to welcome the old man back to his own. He was greatly overcome and seeing his agitation Mrs. Carruth quietly motioned the girls to return to the house while she sat with the

old couple to soothe and calm, and also to discuss the next steps to be taken.

The moon climbed up to the zenith and began to descend to the western horizon, but the voices on the back porch continued.

It was, of course, Mammy who first recovered her self-possession and began to lay before her mistress the plan which had been simmering in her busy mind for the past three days. Mrs. Carruth could not help smiling when she learned in what a thoroughly systematic manner the old woman had gone about carrying her plan into effect, and being several degrees shrewder than the guileless old Rastus, she was not slow to comprehend how Mammy had quietly planned to use him to her advantage and secure a "pa'tner" in whose honesty she could trust implicitly, and at the same time not find beyond her ability to manage according to her own ideas. That she would find a life partner had been the remotest of Mammy's calculations, yet—here he was.

"But Mammy, how in this world do you ex-

pect to run such a business as you have evidently planned and still remain with us?" asked Mrs. Carruth as she laid her hand gently upon Mammy's shoulder.

"Yas'm, dat's it. Dat's *it,*" answered Mammy in a voice divided between doubt and determination. "Yo' see, it's dis-a-way: Ef *I* don' jump right slap bang in an' do dis, somebody else a-gwine ter, and mebbe dat somebody gwine be Miss Eleanor——"

"*Never,* Mammy!" interjected Mrs. Carruth instantly.

"Yo' wouldn' *let* her?" asked Mammy with infinite relief.

"Certainly *not!* What are you thinking of, Mammy?"

"T'inkin' ob? T'inkin' ob?" snapped Mammy. "Why ob dat Miss Connie, ob course. Ain' *she* sot up a boof? An' if *she* do it what in de name o' Gawd gwine stop de odders f'om mo' foolishness I lak ter know?"

"A good many things, Mammy, although my veto would be the strongest preventive."

"Yo' what, ma'am? What a vetto?"

"My refusal to allow it," answered Mrs. Carruth.

"Bress de Lawd fo' *dat* den. But now *dat's* settle an' ma min's at res' der ain' no reason why I shouldn't study 'bout *my* bis'ness, an' fix up dis hyer speculatiom ter once. Here Charles all reddy an' a-waitin' fer ter holp me, an' ef we don' do sumpin' ter mek folks open dey eyes I'se gwine ax why," asserted Mammy positively.

"Mammy, listen to me," said Mrs. Carruth seriously. "Before you venture upon this business, *or any other,* there is a much more serious matter to be considered. You and Charles have come together after many, many years of separation, and in a land where you are strangers. No one knows you were ever husband and wife and, indeed, you have both since married again. You expect to live together, and you love each other, but you must have the wedding ceremony performed again. Yes, Mammy, right here in my home. Then you

may live in the little house down yonder as you are planning to, and all will be well."

Mrs. Carruth spoke very gently but very firmly. Rastus nodded an emphatic agreement to her words, but poor old Mammy, so exceptionally keen and shrewd in other respects, sat looking at her in blank amazement.

"Don't you understand me, Mammy?" asked Mrs. Carruth.

"Be mar'ied? We *is* mar'ied. Ain' he ma hus'ban', an' ain' I his wife?" demanded Mammy.

"You *were* husband and wife long years ago, Mammy, but you have since both married again, firmly believing yourselves released by death from your early bonds. That you were not, does not alter the fact."

"But *I* ain' got no husban' an' never *is* had. Yo' don' 'spose I calls dat po' shif'les Pete wha' I *ha'f* mar'ied enduring' de wah, a *hus'ban',* does yo'?" The scorn in Mammy's voice was withering.

"It does not make any difference what *you*

considered him, Mammy. You were certainly married to him and the fact cannot be altered."

"Das so, Honey. Das so. An' I is shorely been mar'ied ter Ruby, ma wife wha' die ten year ago. I shorely is been. Miss Jinny's right, honey, an' we *boun'* fer ter be mar'ied straight an' fas' ageen. When yo' gwine ma'ry me, Honey? Name de day," urged Rastus.

"Wal I 'clar fo' it!" cried Mammy springing from her chair and striding up and down the porch. "I done thou't I'd growed up, but pears lak I ain'. Go 'long an' fix it up des lak yo' a min' ter. I ain' got nuttin' 'tall ter say 'bout it lessen yo' bofe 'spect me ter say "yas" fer ter help t'ings out when de min'ster ax me is I gwine ter hab dat man fo' ma wedded husban'."

And so the truce was declared and plans were laid for the simple service the following evening. The girls had been in the land o' dreams for many hours when Mrs. Carruth retired to her own room, but when upon the fol-

lowing morning they learned what was pending Mrs. Carruth had much ado to quell the uproar which ensued. Eleanor was distressed lest the whole neighborhood learn of it, and Jean equally disturbed lest it should not, while Constance longed to make the occasion one which would bring much happiness to the good old soul who had been such a bulwark to the entire family.

Mrs. Carruth went quietly about her arrangements, too busy to give much heed to Jean's innumerable questions, for there were several people to see and details to be arranged. Eleanor did not enter very enthusiastically into the coming ceremony, but Constance flew to her little candy kitchen, a room just off the laundry which had been given over to her exclusive use since the candy-making had become such an enterprise, and was seen no more that morning, her gas stove doing extra duty and as every one supposed, if they had time to suppose at all, cooking all sorts of candies for her booth.

Soon after breakfast Jean vanished and did not reappear until luncheon. The family was seated at the table when she returned and came into the room with her hat still on; a little blue chambray shade hat which, from much wear and none too gentle handling, "flopped" all around and certainly fulfilled its intended purpose, for it almost completely concealed head and face.

"Why Jean, go take off your hat, child," exclaimed Eleanor.

Jean did not obey.

"Do you think we are going to have a picnic luncheon, Honey?" asked Constance, laughing at the sober little body opposite her.

Still no move on Jean's part.

"Jean, dear, go remove your hat at once, and make yourself tidy," remonstrated Mrs. Carruth.

"I don't want to take it off," demurred Jean, her eyes cast down and her face flushing more and more.

During this controversy Mammy had en-

tered the dining-room. That it was her own wedding-day, and the ceremony would be performed within a few hours, in no way disturbed the old woman's equanimity. She had gone on with her work without the slightest deviation from her regular routine. Although it had been past two o'clock when she went to her bed she was up at five that morning and by noon the week's ironing was nearly completed. As she entered the room from behind Jean's chair she stopped short on her way to the table, and with a wild cry of "Gawd bress ma soul!" hurried up to Jean and plucked from her head the limp piece of headgear to reveal the child—shorn!

Mammy gave one wild African howl, let fall her plate of buns and dropped upon her knees wringing her hands and shaking the inoffensive hat alternately. The others sprang to their feet and flew to the cause of Mammy's woe, crying:

"Jean! Jean! What *have* you done?"

"Oh, Jean, Baby, how could you?"

"*Who* cut it off?"

"Oh, *do* hush your noise. Mammy, how *can* you act so silly? Anybody would think I'd had my *head* cut off. What does an old mop of kinkly *red* hair (had anyone else dared insinuate that Jean's hair was red they would have been summarily dealt with by its owner) amount to, anyway? I had it cut off in South Riveredge. You were all too busy to bother about me, so I harnessed Baltie and drove there—and—and—its lots cooler and more comfortable this hot weather, anyway," finished Jean, running her fingers through the soft, silken ringlets that clustered so thickly around her bonny face, making of her a handsome boy instead of the winsome little girl her long, waving locks had made, for Jean's hair had literally been her crowning glory.

"But my darling, my darling, *why* did you do such a thing without first asking mother's permission?" almost sobbed Mrs. Carruth, as she laid her hands caressingly upon the shorn head.

"'Cause I knew you wouldn't *give* it," was the indisputable reply.

"But where are all your pretty curls, Jean? What have you done with them?" asked Constance, while Mammy continued to wail.

Jean shook her head in the negative.

"You *must* tell," insisted Eleanor, giving the culprit's arm a little shake.

Jean jerked from her, crying:

"I won't tell."

"Sweetheart, listen to me," said Mrs. Carruth firmly. "You must tell mother the whole story now. The mischief is done, and it can not be undone, but I have certainly got to know the truth. No; be quiet, Eleanor; leave this to me. Come here, Jean," and leading the little girl into the adjoining room she drew her upon her lap as she continued: "Now tell mother all, dear."

Jean flung her arms about her mother, buried her face in her neck and with a burst of sobs confessed:

"I *sold* it."

Had she asserted that she had burned it, the sensation created could hardly have been greater.

"You sold your hair, Jean? What in this world are you saying, child?"

"I *did!* I *did.* I wanted to buy Mammy a wedding present—I don't remember when she was married before—I didn't have any money. I couldn't take my Christmas money yet, could I? That would have been mean. So I went down to that place in South Riveredge where they advertise that they buy hair and I asked them how much they'd give me for mine. The woman looked and looked at it, and felt of it, and smiled at the other women, and pretty soon she said fifty cents, but I saw her wink when she said it. Then I said she needn't think that because I was just a little girl she could cheat me like *that* and I started to go away. And then she was in a dreadful hurry to talk to me, and I said I didn't want to talk to her, that she was a big cheat and I was going right back home to tell my mother so. Then she tried to

be mighty nice and wanted to know who I was, and I told her I was somebody *everybody* in Riveredge knew and if she didn't act right I'd *tell* everybody in Riveredge where I knew she had lots and lots of customers. *That* settled it pretty quick. And then she cut my hair and gave me five dollars for it, and then I went and bought Mammy's wedding present and it's out in the hall, and now I *won't* be scolded," ended the culprit with a fresh outburst of sobs.

Every word spoken in the library by Jean could be distinctly heard in the dining-room where Mammy, still completely overwhelmed, knelt on the floor, her hands clasped in her lap, her voice bewailing the calamity and her buns scattered all about her. Eleanor and Constance had followed into the library and stood listening to the astonishing story. At its concluding words they flew into the hall to see the result of Jean's purchase. Mammy had heard every word also and electricity could not have moved her more suddenly. In an instant she was in the library demanding:

"Wha'—wha'—yo' say, baby? Yo' done sol' yo' *ha'r* fer ter buy a weddin' presen' fo' *me?* An' dat 'oman don' yonder buy it an' gib yo' five dollars fo' it? She cut it off yo' haid jist cose yo' ax her to? Tell me her name, baby. Was it dat 'oman down on State street name Levy? M', I thou't so, an' ma Lawd, jist let me lay ma han's on her! If I don' frail her out an' fetch back dat ha'r ma name ain' Lutie Blairsdale," cried Mammy as she rushed toward the door utterly beside herself with wrath and excitement.

"Mammy! Stop! Come back this instant!" commanded Mrs. Carruth. "Are you insane? What good could you do by going down to South Riveredge and making a scene? Would you make us the laughing-stock of the place? Think a moment."

"But des look at dat chile's haid. Dat 'oman need ter be frailed out," cried Mammy, bursting into fresh tears.

"Frailing her out, as you call it, would never restore Jean's hair, but would make endless

trouble for me. The hair will grow in time and perhaps it is as well. I was growing very vain of my Goldilocks, and she will be cooler during the summer without all that heavy hair, I dare say," said Mrs. Carruth, although her voice failed her at the last words, for Jean was her pride.

"Yes, we will make the best of it now it is done, although I shall hardly know my little tomboy," added Constance.

"Well, now that you've made your sacrifice on Cupid's altar suppose you show us what you have selected," said Eleanor, as she handed a package to Mammy. "Open your present, Mammy."

"I ain' wantter *look* at it. I ain' never gwine see it widout I see dat chile shorn like a ape," cried Mammy.

"If you don't I'll cry till I cry my eyes out," protested Jean, perilously on the brink at that instant, for the past three hours had been hours of varied and violent emotions for her.

Mammy instantly relented and unfastened the parcel.

In a gorgeous red plush box, lined with white satin lay a comb, brush, mirror, *powder box,* soap box, and a complete *manicure set* of a most elaborate design in pink celluloid. Poor Jean, her curls had been sacrificed on love's altar sure enough, and the result was truly startling.

Mammy looked at it long and earnestly, fingering gingerly each article as it lay in its satin section. Then she, as usual, rose to the occasion. Gathering the precious possession in her arms she got upon her feet, and raising one hand as though invoking unseen powers to witness her words she cried:

"Dar never was, an' dar cyant never be nothin' ter compare ter dis yer weddin' gif' in de hul worl', an' if I ketches Charles Devon so much as pintin' his finger at it, I gwine bus' his haid wide open," and with this frightful threat she strode from the room.

CHAPTER X

A Golden Wedding Ceremony.

Eight-thirty P. M. The little parlor in Mrs. Carruth's home was deserted, although it bore a festive air as though some special ceremony were pending, for bowls and vases of flowers stood all about, the window shades were drawn and the lamps lighted. In the adjoining library the leaves of a book rustled now and again where someone was reading, and from time to time turning a page. Otherwise not a sound was to be heard on that floor although overhead the murmur of voices and an occasional merry laugh floated downward. Presently a door opened and a cheery voice called:

"*Now* you may *all* come and see my handiwork," and hurrying feet sounded along the upper hall, followed by exclamations of surprise and delight, then Mammy's old voice protesting:

"Well, if she ain' jist cl'ar mak' a ole fool ob me I lak ter know what yo' call it."

"Why, Mammy, you are perfectly splendid!" cried Mrs. Carruth's voice.

"There isn't a handsomer old colored woman than our Mammy anywhere in all Riveredge," protested Eleanor.

"Doesn't she look lovely?" demanded Constance. "I tell you I'm proud of my handiwork. Turn around slowly, Mammy, so we may get the full effect."

"Tu'n 'roun'! Tu'n roun'," repeated Mammy deprecatingly. "Who ever hear tell ob sich foolishness. A ol' 'oman lak me diked out ter be mar'ied. Huh! I bait yo' *Charles* ain' gwine be fitten ter be seen an' we'll be a purty mis-hitched pair fer sartin. Yo' see," protested Mammy, as she revolved at Constance's bidding.

"My goodness, that's the very solemn truth, isn't it?" cried Eleanor. "Poor Charles hasn't had a soul to look after *him* while we have all been so busy with his bride. What a shame!

I'm going right straight down to inspect him this minute and do my duty by him."

"Mammy, I have never seen you look so well," said Mrs. Carruth, patting Mammy gently upon her shoulder with a hand still soft and snowy white, preserved in all its beauty by the devotion of the old colored woman who would not hear of her using it roughly.

Mammy did, indeed, look her best. Immediately the early dinner was ended Eleanor and Constance had, in spite of Mammy's protests, cleared away and washed the dishes sending the old woman to her room to change her clothes, but bidding her under dire penalties not put her gown on until they came. Years before Mrs. Carruth had given Mammy a black silk, a garment long coveted by the good soul, and had seen to its making. It had always been Mammy's most cherished possession, worn but rarely and only upon occasions of great moment. At other times it was carefully laid away in lavender sprigs. Now it was brought forth for her wedding, and never did old

colored woman look more dignified than did Mammy when the loving hands of her "babies" had gowned her for the pending ceremony. The rich silk rustled about her, soft folds of tulle encircled her throat, were crossed upon her breast and held at her belt with a small bunch of pansies. Upon her head, instead of the customary bandana, rested a daintily frilled cap, fashioned by Constance's deft fingers, of the delicate tulle. Mammy looked exactly what she was: a self-respecting, beloved old servitor.

"Don' see wha' fo' yo' all settin' out fer ter mek sich a fool ob me," she protested, so overcome by self-consciousness, and the sight of her own magnificence that she had to resort to her only outlet under like circumstances—berating her "chillern."

"Hush, Mammy. You mustn't be cross on your wedding day. Don't you know we all love you dearly and want to do you honor?" asked Mrs. Carruth gently.

"Don't you know we all love you, Mammy,

and have to show it?" asked Constance as she carefully laid straight a fold of the tulle.

Poor Mammy! Her feigned ill-temper had only been a disguise for her deeper feelings, and at the kind words of those she loved far better than her own life, her assumed anger vanished and she was instantly dissolved in tears.

"Gawd bress yo', honey! I knows it. I knows it, an' I ain' nuttin' on dis hyer worl' but a hateful ol' crank wha' ain' fitten fer ter be kep' by the God-blessedes' white folks a ol' nigger ever *is* call her own. No I ain'. But don' min' what I'se sayin'. Don' min' it, Baby. It ain' on'y jist Mammy, an' de Lawd know I'se willin' fer ter die fer eve'y las' one ob yo'—I *is* fer a fac'."

"Hush, Mammy! Hush! We know it. We do not need words to assure us of it. You have given us too many years' proof of it. And now stop crying and come down stairs. Dr. Morton is waiting in the library. Eleanor will have got Charles in wedding array by

now, and Jean—why where *is* Jean?" and Mrs. Carruth broke off sharply.

"She was here when we began to dress Mammy, mother, because she ran and gathered the pansies. Perhaps she is in our room. I'll go call her. She must not delay us. Jean! Jean!" called Constance, as she hurried from the room. But call and search as she might no Jean was to be found.

"This is too bad of the child," said Mrs. Carruth, as much annoyed as it was ever possible for her placid soul to grow. "But come downstairs with me, Mammy. She must come soon."

In the hall below they found Eleanor and Charles awaiting them, the latter extremely agitated as he fumbled with his pocket handkerchief, rolling and unrolling it, twisting it into a ball, stuffing it into his pocket, only to drag it forth the next second, until Mammy became nearly distracted and cried:

"Charles, fo' de Lawd sake, let yo' han'ker'cher 'lone! Is yo' aimin' ter play ball or git

mar'ied?" whereupon poor Charles grew hopelessly confused, and turning to Eleanor handed the wadded-up article to her, saying:

"Thank yo', Missie. Thank yo'. I reckons yo' better tek cyre ob it."

This was too much for Mammy. Snatching the offending article from Eleanor's hand she cried:

"Name o' man, come quick ter de min'ster an' le' me claim de right to tell yo' wedder yo's a-foot or a-horseback, fo' de Lawd knows *yo'* ain' knowin' now."

"Yes, we must not delay a moment longer," insisted Mrs. Carruth, as she stepped into the library and spoke a word to the clergyman waiting there, who at once entered the parlor and took his place near a table.

"Now Mammy, take Charles' arm—no, his left one, Mammy—and when Connie begins your wedding march, walk right into the parlor and stand in front of Dr. Morton," said Eleanor, as Constance hurried into the parlor

and began to softly play "Betrothed Anew," set to the softest, sweetest melody.

Mammy stood in the hall straight as an arrow, her old head held as proudly as little Lutie Boliver had held hers forty-seven years before, but poor Charles was nearly reduced to a state of collapse in spite of his brave attire. Charles had done his best to do honor to his wedding. His broadcloth suit, with its long frock coat, was guiltless of a speck, his linen spotless, and Eleanor had seen to it that his cravat was properly tied, and had placed in his button-hole a sprig of white lilac. But in spite of all, Charles was utterly, wholly and entirely miserable. Many years had passed since he had been a house servant and closely associated with white folks.

All was ready, the soft strains of the music filled the house, the clergyman waited, Mrs. Carruth stood beside him and Eleanor was urging the bride and groom to proceed.

"Go *on,* Mammy. Go on. They are all waiting," she insisted.

"Dey ain'!" contradicted Mammy, positively. "Ma *baby* ain' hyer, an' I ain' gwine stir one step twell she *is*."

Eleanor was in despair. "Oh Mammy!" she began, when she was interrupted by a commotion out in the kitchen, a trampling of feet and a confusion of voices, one louder and more dominating than all the others, which issued orders like a general.

"Now hush your noise, every single one of you, and do exactly as I tell you, or you can't come to Mammy's wedding. You Lindy, you come here and walk in front, 'cause you are the littlest. Now you stand right beside her, Laz'rus, and you, Lilly Bell and George Washington, stand *next*. And now Gustus and Mirandy you come last because you are bigger than all the others. And mind what I tell you or out you all go, yes, every single one of you and not one smitch of the wedding cake that my sister Constance made for our Mammy will you get. No, nor any of the beau-ti-ful lemonade with strawberries floating in it, either.

Now come on. Keep step and march decently right behind *me*. I'm not going to have any blunderbusses at *my* Mammy's wedding."

All this was clearly audible from the foot of the stairs where Eleanor, Mammy and Charles stood, although not a word of it could be heard in the parlor.

"My heart and body!" cried Eleanor under her breath, " what *has* Jean done now?"

Mammy, true to "the ruling instincts," started toward the pantry door but was checked by Eleanor's hand, and before another move could be made the door swung open and Jean came marching through in perfect step to the strains of the music, while behind her marched? save the mark! six negro children, ranging in age from five to fifteen, all gaily bedizened for the festive occasion, all frightened nearly out of whatever small wits nature had originally endowed them with, and all shuffling and scuffling and tripping over their own unmanageable feet.

Charles stood with mouth agape and speech-

less. Mammy opened hers to launch forth her sentiments but was happily restrained by thoughts of the solemnity of the occasion. Eleanor sprang forward and grasping the culprit's arm cried under her breath:

"Jean! What *have* you done?"

"Hush! Let me alone! Mammy hasn't got a single relation in the whole wide world to be at her wedding in spite of those 'cousins-in-the-Lord' she used to talk about, and do you think I was going to let her be married without—without—well, without any of her own people to know about it? I *guess not!* So I borrowed these, and I'll take care of them and send 'em back just the very minute I've used 'em," attested Jean as though she had borrowed half a dozen tea cups. "Now you must *all* walk right behind *me* and right in front of Mammy and Charles, 'cause we're *all* her bridesmaids, and mind you watch me and do *exactly like I do.*"

With one despairing gasp Eleanor gave it up, and the next second the amazing procession filed into the parlor. At her first glimpse of it

Mrs. Carruth nearly collapsed, and the dignified clergyman at her side gasped. Constance gave one glance, and the bar which she played at that instant had never been written by the composer, and she nearly disgraced the occasion, but somehow managed to collect herself, as with head bent over the keyboard she continued the march. Jean was the only entirely self-possessed individual present as she led her dusky band up to the waiting clergyman, and with supreme dignity motioned to them where to stand. They stood. Wooden images could not have been more motionless. If anything more had been needed to awe them into silence and arrested motion, Jean's colossal dignity and majestic frown would have supplied it.

The ceremony proceeded. Only a few moments were required to reunite the old couple divided for so many years, and to bring into holy bonds the two faithful old souls whose lives had been filled with vicissitudes, who had known many sorrows but few joys, and to con-

fer upon them the honors common to all—husband and wifehood.

When the question: "Who gives this woman," etc., was asked Mrs. Carruth's sweet voice reverently answered, "I, Virginia Blairsdale Carruth," etc., and poor old Mammy's voice quivered when she tried to obey the clergyman's behest to repeat after him the words of the service.

Mrs. Carruth was the first to congratulate the old couple. Taking Mammy's hand she held it in both her own as she said very, very tenderly:

"Mammy, dear, dear Mammy, you know we wish you well. That our love for you and our gratitude for all you have been to us is past expression. That nothing we can ever do for you can repay you for your devotion to us. We wish you and Charles all happiness."

Mammy could not speak. She bowed her head upon the soft white hands and sobbed, and the occasion might have become one of sadness rather than joy had not Jean's wedding guests

created a diversion just at that moment. During the service, they had stood absolutely immovable just where Jean had placed them, eyes nearly popping out of their heads and bodies rigid as wooden images, but when it was over they began to recall Jean's promises and the inducements she had offered to lure them to come with her, for Jean had well nigh run her legs off to reach old Aunt Hepsy's house in order to borrow these, her grandchildren. Aunt Hepsy was a sort of general factotum to the community, called in upon all occasions for odd jobs, and her orphaned grandchildren were practically wards in general of her patrons. Mrs. Carruth often had Aunt Hepsy to help out when house-cleaning was in order, and Jean had seen no reason why she, or at least her representatives, should not help out on other occasions. So without saying a word to anyone, she rushed off to Aunt Hepsy's, corralled her flock and pressed them into service. At the crucial moment Lindy, the "littlest," saved the situation. As Mammy, true to the charac-

teristics of her race, grew more and more emotional and Charles from sympathy, threatened to follow suit, Lindy's wool which, in honor of the occasion, had been carefully divided into the most exact geometrical squares, laboriously braided into numerous pigtails and tied with narrow red ribbons, began to rise up as she began to move backward, meanwhile nervously twisting and twining her fingers. Unhappily Lindy did not have eyes in the back of her head and the next instant there was a collision and a crash and the wedding ceremony instantly became a christening as Lindy lay prone with the contents of a large bowl of roses scattered over her, while the water poured upon the little black, terrified face. It was a big bowl and held a good deal. The howl which instantly filled the room brought the wedding party to the rescue of the unfortunate. It was the bride who jerked the screaming child to her feet and gave her no gentle slap as she demanded:

"Why ain' yo' look wha' yo' backin' to, yo'

little fool nigger? Scarrin' Miss Jinny and all de yethers mos' ter deaf. Stan' up and quit yo' hollerin', or I'll smack yo' good."

"I want—I want some weddin' c—cake," wailed Lindy, digging her fists into her eyes.

"I'll give yo' weddin' cake if yo' don' hush yo' noise. Now eve'y las' one ob yo' clar' outen dis yer parlor. Tain' no place fo' niggers no how. Go!" and Mammy was herself again and mistress of the situation. "Come 'long Charles. We done mar'ied all straight an' fas' now, an' I thank yo' kindly sir, and yo' Miss Jinny and yo' *all,"* with a deep courtesy to those present, "but its time now we got settle back ter bis'ness."

"But your wedding cake, Mammy, that I made all my own self for you?" cried Constance.

"Yas'm. I know, but I gwine cut it out yander whar I *b'longs at,* an' I'll sen' in a plate fo' yo' all. But I gotter get dese hyer niggers f'om unner foot and tek off dese hyer fummadiddles. I ain' got no mo' time fo' fool-

ishness, an' I cyant wo'k in a silk frock. Come 'long Charles," and true to her real self, off Mammy stalked marshaling her dusky guests ahead of her with Charles obediently following on behind.

"She is somewhat of a character I see," laughed Dr. Morton as he dropped into the easy chair toward which Mrs. Carruth motioned him.

"You put it mildly," laughed Mrs. Carruth, as she and her family settled down to discuss recent events with the amused clergyman.

CHAPTER XI.

Blairsdale *and* Devon.

With her usual expedition, once she had set her mind to it, Mammy rushed her preparations for her lunch counter venture. The day following her wedding old Aunt Hepsy was engaged, the furniture and other odds and ends stored in the little cabin at the end of the garden were put into other places; some in the stable loft, some in Mrs. Carruth's attic. Paper-hangers and painters were engaged and before one had time to draw a full breath Mammy had established herself and Charles in their new domain. A large, model range nearly filled the little kitchen, all manner of pans, saucepans and baking dishes were at hand, supplies had been ordered in, and Mammy was ready to begin business at *her* "eend ob de sheebang," as she put it.

Meanwhile Charles had been equally active

at the Arcade, and Mr. Porter, with his usual kindness of heart, and real interest in the old couple, had done everything in his power to help them. He had gone with Charles to arrange for the articles necessary to equip the counter and advise with him as to expenditures and the absolute requirements, for Charles was less shrewd than Mammy. So expeditious had all three been that by Saturday morning the lunch counter presented quite a business-like appearance, and when Mammy came over to cast her critical eye upon it, she was hard put to it to conceal her pride in the venture.

Constance and Jean accompanied her and Charles, Mr. Porter and Mr. Stuyvesant had also come to view the result of their united efforts, for each one had contributed his services in some way, and felt a personal interest in the venture.

"Mammy, how have you managed to accomplish so much in five days?" asked Hadyn, smiling kindly at the old woman as she stood

beside him, her sharp eyes taking note of every detail in the arrangement of the counter.

"Part-wise by bossin' an' part-wise by doin', Massa Stuyv'sant. Charles here, he do jist lak I tell him, an' Hepsy back yander, *she* do lak I say, an' *I* does jist what I has a min' ter, so t'ings jist natchelly hums."

"How about your sign, Mammy? Have you thought of that? You know you've got to have a name for your firm. What is it to be, Devon and Co.?" asked Mr. Porter.

Such an innocent question seemed hardly sufficient cause for such a pronounced demonstration, but a match touched to gunpowder could hardly have produced a greater. Mammy whirled around upon the speaker, her eyes flashing and her face a thunder-cloud.

"De—De—Devon *an'* Company? De—Devon *an'?*" she repeated. "An' who gwine be de *comp'ny,* I lak ter know? Near's *I* kin understan' bis'ness de one what puts up de cyash fer it is de one what gits dey name on de *front* eend ob de sign boa'd, an' Charles an' me ain'

come ter no disputatiom 'bout dat *yit*. Dey's no tellin' what we *lak* ter come ter bimeby, but des now *he* know an' *I* know who backin' dis hyer speculatiom an' we done settle de sign boa'd. Hit's gwine be

Blairsdale *an'* Devon,

sah!"

Mr. Porter looked at Hadyn Stuyvesant just one second, then disgraced himself forever. The Arcade echoed as he turned to Constance and said:

"Miss Constance, save me! Come quick to the candy booth. I need three pounds of your candy right off to sweeten me up after all this bitterness I've let loose on the public. Beg pardon, Mammy. I'll never offend again," and still in a state bordering upon helplessness, he hurried away to Constance's candy booth at the other end of the Arcade, Constance following with all speed lest she, too, come under Mammy's ban. Charles, scared nearly to death, hurried behind the counter to busy himself arranging and rearranging the piles of

cups, saucers and plates, already arranged with the utmost care, Jean running after him to peep and pry into every nook and corner. It was Hadyn Stuyvesant who saved the day. He had never smiled, but turning to Mammy said very seriously:

"I see you have sound business instincts, Mammy. It is always better to have *both* members of a firm represented. I agree with you fully, and—and—if you have not already given your order for your sign, may I claim the honor of presenting the firm with it? You see I have not been able to do much, thus far, and I feel quite slighted. Now if you will let me do this I shall feel that I am in a way included in the venture and have an interest in its success."

Oil upon the waters! Hadyn Stuyvesant should have been a member of the diplomatic corps of his country. For one instant Mammy regarded him searchingly—then the day was won. Fairly stammering with gratified pride she answered:

"Now—now—I—I—'clar, Massa Stuyv'sant. I—I—*'clar,* yo's mos' 'barrass me wid dat se'ges'iom. I 'clar yo' *do,* fer a fac'. But I sutteny cyant declime. I sho' would be proud ter have yo' 'tribute dat to our bis'ness. I sho' would. Yo' Charles! Yo' hyer wha' Massa Stuyv'sant done say he wanter do fo' *us?* Den quit rattlin' dem dishes an' come 'long out f'om behime dat counter an' mek yo' manners."

Four days of matrimony had taught Charles the wisdom of ready compliance with his spouse's wishes, and he responded instantly, Jean bobbing out and running to Hadyn's side to slip her hand confidingly into his, although she did not speak one word.

And thus came the famous firm of "Blairsdale and Devon" into existence. True it was not formally opened to the public until the end of the following week, for many things had to be cooked in order to "stock up," as Mammy put it, but, that Saturday morning saw the first steps taken and "Blairsdale and Devon" duly established in Number Sixteen, Arcade Build-

ing. There is no telling how long Mammy would have hovered over the all too fascinating counter, or Charles have arranged and rearranged for the hundredth time the various appurtenances already purchased for it, while Jean held tight fast to Hadyn Stuyvesant and drank in every word, had not a diversion occurred; a diversion which caused her to cry:

"The circus! The circus!" and dart away toward the front door, Mammy calling as she rushed after her:

"Hyer yo' chile! Wait! Stop! I ain' gwine have yo' gittin' mix up wid no sich crowd as dat out yonder!"

Perhaps an unprejudiced observer might have believed Mammy quite as eager as her charge to see the "Great and Magnificent Panoply" as advertised in the posters which for a week had decorated every available barn, fence or shed in the town, but no one hinted at that possibility and Hadyn Stuyvesant smiled as he said:

"Rastus, oh, I beg your pardon, it is Charles

now, isn't it? You'd better go down to the door and look after your wife and Miss Jean. The crush is pretty heavy down there."

"Yes—sah. Yes—sah, I reckons I had, sah!" agreed Charles, with alacrity as he hurried off, no great amount of urging being needed to head him toward the parade with its tooting band.

The circus, for many days advertised, had at last arrived and alack! had taken up its stand upon Jabe Raulsbury's pasture land—no longer needed as pasture land, since Jabe had long since ceased to keep cattle; his farm, his home and literally, he, himself, having fallen into a state of utter degeneration. He and his wife—they had no children—led a hand-to-mouth existence upon almost nothing; the goodly heritage which had been Jabe's from his father having been dissipated and lost through utter inertia and neglect. Consequently, the sum offered by the circus agent when casting about for a place to set up his "show" had been seized upon with avidity by the wretched and miserly

creature, who was too lazy to work for an honest living, but perfectly ready to take every penny within reach of his grasping hands, no matter at what cost to his friends, his neighbors or the community. He was fully aware of the indignity he was forcing upon the residents of that section of Riveredge by permitting a circus to take up its stand directly in its center, but far from feeling any compunction on that score, he secretly chuckled over his opportunity to "get even," as he considered it, for well he knew the degree of aversion all felt for him.

So on this sunny Saturday morning, after having paraded through every section of all the Riveredges, along trailed prancing horses, dancing ponies, gay vans, lumbering cages of wild beasts, blaring band chariots and the endless following and paraphernalia of a traveling show, to say nothing of half the riff-raff of the town, to wend its way through the very garden section of Riveredge, turn into the fields where once poor blind Baltie had grazed

and spread itself broadcast over Jabe's useless acres. In a few hours the whole section was buzzing like a hive of bees about to swarm—buzzing with the following of a country show.

In the afternoon Jean, escorted by the bride and groom, attended the performance given at 2 o'clock, and which of the three *children* gave way to the wildest ecstasy, or most enjoyed the prancing steeds, acrobats and clowns, would be hard to say. It was indeed a "half holiday" as Mammy had foreseen and when the performance was over, the last glimpse of the side shows taken, the wild animals, the photograph gallery, the shooting gallery, and the initiated only knows what not that goes to make up the general personnel of a circus, had been enjoyed to the full, the people who had come from far and near started toward their homes. They paid little attention to the directions of their footsteps, but rushed across carefully-kept lawns, plucked flowers from beautifully-tended beds, broke shrubbery and resorted to the license common to a crowd of

its kind, until the property owners of the vicinity were nearly driven wild.

Now curious things happen in this world, and from seemingly insignificant causes great events often grow. Although in a different section of Riveredge from her former home, so short a time before reduced to ashes through Eleanor's misdirected research in the realms of chemistry, Mrs. Carruth's present one was at no great distance from Jabe Raulsbury's land, an upper road, rarely used, and skirting along the foot of the steep hill which rose in a succession of terraces from the river, leading almost to her back door, now Mammy's *front* door.

Jabe's land was extensive, running back and up the hill for many acres. It was no wonder the circus agent had wholly and entirely approved the site and been prompt to take advantage of its opportunities. Circus people do not often find a hundred or so of grassy acres turned over to their use whereupon their horses and other grass-eating creatures may graze at

will. It was a stroke of luck not to be disregarded. That the fences were down in many places and there was more or less danger of their livestock ambling off to fresh fields and pastures new did not figure in their calculations. They are a happy-go-lucky class of individuals, as a rule, and this particular company was no exception. When the afternoon performance ended a cursory inspection of the pasture land lying farther up the hill was made, approved, and several of the animals either turned loose entirely upon it to graze, or picketed with indifferent care. To the poor, over-worked horses paradise had surely come, and they disported themselves right joyously. The elephants manifested their delight by swaying from one foot to another, pulling up great bunches of the fresh, sweet grass, tossing it about with their trunks and throwing it upon their heads and backs, while the other animals gave evidence of their pleasure after their own fashion; all the most matter-of-course outcome of their exceptional surround-

ings, such animals rarely finding a table spread in the wilderness of their unenviable wanderings.

Half a mile down the back road above mentioned, on the little porch of their new abode, sat Mammy and Charles. It was about 8 o'clock, and the long June twilight filled all the world. The day's work was ended, and they were discussing the strange chain of events of the past few weeks, as well as those of many years which had gone before. A contented old couple come into their own after many years.

On the pleasant piazza of the house beyond, Mrs. Carruth, Eleanor and Constance, sat listening to Jean's lively description of the delights of the afternoon. All was peace and tranquillity. Now and again a merry laugh floated up to the piazza from the street at the foot of the broad terrace below, or the sound of children's voices from a neighbor's grounds told of light hearts enjoying the perfect summer evening. Jean was in the midst of a lively description of the marvelous performances of

a trick horse when the assembled group was startled by the wildest commotion at the rear of the house: a series of shrieks, shouts, squeals, trumpetings and sounds of a most unearthly sort.

Mrs. Carruth and the girls sprang to their feet, stood for a second and then rushed through the house to the rear porch where they came to a halt as one individual, petrified by the sight they beheld. In the soft, lambent light which served only to exaggerate their outlines stood an elephant, a giraffe and a camel, each in an attitude of "come-on-if-you-dare," while Mammy, dauntless to the last ditch, stood about twenty feet from these extraordinary trespassers, wildly waving a large white apron, the first thing she had been able to lay hold of, and screaming:

"Shoo! Shoo! Git out ob dis yer gyarden. Git out ob my Mistis flower baids!" while Charles shouted from the comparative safety of the cabin door:

"Fo' de Lawd's sake, Honey, come back hyer! Come back hyer inter de house fo' dem debbils tromp you daid!"

CHAPTER XII.

Mammy's Honeymoon.

It is given to few individuals to exercise control over wild beasts, and very few care to "tackle the job," but the "job" had evidently yet to be developed which Mammy would hesitate to "tackle." That she was in real danger never seemed to occur to her, yet the animals before her were not of the species which one gently "shoos" from one's presence by a flapping apron. The elephant stood with trunk at salaam, as its wild trumpetings filled the air. The camel faced Mammy with neck extended, ears laid back and teeth bared as it gave voice to ugly squeals. The giraffe alone seemed awed by her demonstrations and stood like a stuffed beast, it's ridiculous head outstretched toward her, it's great eyes staring and filled with terror. A break in the wire fence en-

circling the grounds told the whole story at a glance.

When Charles discovered the reinforcements in the form of his white folks he plucked up heart of grace and rushed toward them, imploring:

"Name er de Lawd, Missie, call dat 'oman way f'om whar she at! She gwine be tromped daid right fore we-all's eyes. She is, fer a fac'! Please ma'am, *please* ma'am call her off."

"Mammy! Mammy! Come away! Come here at once!" commanded Mrs. Carruth.

"Oh, Mammy, do come away!" echoed Constance, starting toward the old woman regardless of danger, but caught and restrained by Mrs. Carruth, while Eleanor was reduced almost to tears and Jean danced up and down in the wildest state of excitement, and, if the truth must be confessed, in delight, as she cried:

"Oh, *don't* send them away! Don't! Aren't they big and splendid! Let me go to Mammy so I can see them better!" whereupon Con-

stance laid a firm hold upon the half-daft little lassie.

"Mammy! Mammy! Obey me!" again commanded Mrs. Carruth, seriously alarmed for the old woman's safety.

"Wha' fo' yo' callin' me fer ter come way, Miss Jinny? Is yo' t'ink I gwine let dese beasteses tear up de hull gyarden and raise de very ol' scratch hissef' 'thout liftin' a finger ter git 'em out! Huh! Shoo! I say! Go long out o' dis yer gyarden, yo' big black satan! Git 'way!" and another wild demonstration of the apron was flourished almost in the elephant's face, which proved just a trifle more than the creature could countenance. There was a wild squeal and a rush and Mammy's honeymoon would certainly have come to an untimely end had not the camel at that instant plunged forward and collided with the angry "Luna," as the elephant was named, the cause of the sudden plunge being a sharp blow from the rear, as a voice cried:

"Now haven't you a particle of sense? Run

to that porch! Run for your life and get indoors, every one of you!"

Once before Mammy had descended from her pedestal at the persuasive qualities of that voice. Just what it was which caused her instant response in the present situation it would be hard to say, but giving one glance at the tall, slender figure brandishing the broom which had served as a weapon of offense, she cried:

"La, Massa Fo'bes!" and fled for the shelter of the porch.

"Get indoors, every one of you. Quick! Do as I say! There is no telling what that creature may do if she gets on the rampage," commanded Professor Forbes, marshaling the family into the house before him and leaving the outraged "Luna" to romp around in the fast-deepening twilight, the fact that darkness was descending upon her probably being the saving grace of the situation.

"Beg pardon, Mrs. Carruth, but no time to take chances. Have you notified the circus

people? Sent word to the police?" questioned Professor Forbes, with more force and rapidity than often moved him.

"We've done nothing. There has been no time. Mammy took matters into her own hands," answered Mrs. Carruth.

"We never had such a thing happen before," was Eleanor's somewhat superfluous statement.

"No, I don't suppose you *do* receive such visitors *every* evening," said Professor Forbes drily. "They *are* a trifle unusual. Just as soon have 'em go back home, wouldn't you?" and striding up to the telephone the man of science invoked the aid of science and in less than a minute was issuing orders to the police headquarters which seemed to arouse some suspicion as to his sanity in their minds, since the portion of the conversation overheard ran rather thuswise:

"Yes, right here at Mrs. Carruth's home. Three wild animals. Yes, that's straight. Come up and see for yourself if you entertain

any doubts. Come from? Why broke loose from the show down at Raulsbury's. Get after some of 'em, and have 'em come up and take care of their beasts, they're raising the very—well they're tearing all over the place. Hustle, for there's no telling where they'll break loose next. Yes, good-by," and the receiver was snapped back.

Meanwhile, Luna had gone ambling through the grounds, making straight for Mammy's cabin, the other creatures calmly browsing upon anything within reach, while Charles and Mammy stood at Mrs. Carruth's kitchen window, bewailing their helplessness.

"Now don't get excited," admonished the Professor, "they'll get people down here as quickly as possible and no harm will be done. I didn't exactly count on *this* reception after my two weeks' absence, but there's no accounting for modern forms of entertainment. Do sit down, Mrs. Carruth; you can't help matters by standing at that window, and Miss Constance, Mammy won't rush out again. You

need not watch her so closely. How goes the candy-making? I tried to get down to the Arcade this afternoon, but hadn't time, and my mouth fairly waters for some of those caramels. I hear you have decided to enter Radnor in September, Miss Carruth. Maybe I can smooth things out a bit for you. And has my little merchant been plying her end of business while I've been away?"

If Professor Forbes' object in talking as steadily as a phonograph was to divert his listeners' attention from things happening beyond their windows his success was negative in the extreme, for Jean fidgeted from one window to another, Constance was in dire distress lest Mammy rush off again, Eleanor on the verge of hysterics between the danger and the absurdity of the whole situation, and poor Mrs. Carruth's ears were strained to catch the first footfalls of those likely to relieve her of her unwelcome visitors. In reply to Professor Forbes' last question she answered:

"Yes, she has just been married—"

"Married!" echoed Professor.

"Oh, I mean *Mammy* has. This is her honeymoon, you know. She—"

"Mammy married? I say, Mrs. Carruth, I wouldn't let that little episode out yonder upset me so much if I were you. Just—"

"Name er de Lawd, Massa Fo'bes, dat el'phunt gwine frazzle out de hull cabin ef de men-folks what it b'longs to ain' come quick," cried Mammy, bursting into the library, Charles following close behind and stammering with excitement:

"M—M—istiss, M—M—istiss, we-all's house shore gwine be bus' open."

The feminine occupants of the room, despite the attempts of the serenely-smiling Professor to calm their anxiety, ran as one to the back porch, he following perforce. The moon, now shining brightly, revealed a startling spectacle. Luna's huge form stood in front of the cabin, while with the methodical precision of a slowly-moving crane her trunk was thrust through one of the windows and withdrawn

with whatever object happened to be within reach; a chair, a huge kettle, a towel, a section of stovepipe, a small shawl, several cooking utensils, in short, any and everything within range was added to the pile growing behind her, as article after article was tossed airily over her back as though of no possible value to her majesty. Mammy had spent a good portion of the morning baking loaves of bread for the following Monday, which would be her opening day, and the perfectly browned, oval loaves, twenty in number, had been carefully placed upon her kitchen table and covered with a snowy cloth. Why Luna had overlooked them until this moment it would be hard to say, but now they began to appear, and no juggler tossing glass balls lightly over his shoulder, ever toyed more gracefully with them than did this huge creature with those flaky loaves. One after the other they were drawn through the window, thrown up into the air, to land wherever gravitation drew them, and with each toss came a shriek of despair and rage

from Mammy and a chorus of wails from h others. Fifteen loaves dotted the lawn when shouts and voices announced the arrival of her elephantship's lawful guardians, and like a child caught in the midst of mischief, the creature instantly ceased her depredations, and when a moment later her keeper and several other men rushed around the corner of the cabin Madam Luna stood meekly swinging her trunk and apparently meditating upon the beauty of the night, only the chaos all around her hinting at her transgressions.

Charles and Mammy were beside themselves. Mrs. Carruth distressed beyond measure, Eleanor and Constance in tears of sympathy. It was left to Jean to save the situation. Breaking away from the group, she rushed across the lawn and striking an attitude in the midst of the scattered loaves of bread, cried:

"Look! Look! Just look at what your hateful old elephant has done to my Mammy's cabin and all her things, and just *spoiled* her whole honeymoon. You just ought to be made to pay

her for all these spoiled things. She's spent heaps and heaps of money getting settled, and how do you think she's ever going to open her lunch counter now? Look at her loaves of bread. I *hate* your old elephant and I wish I'd never, never gone with Charles and Mammy to your circus!"

Had a nest of hornets suddenly swarmed upon him the elephant keeper could hardly have been more bewildered, for Jean's words fairly tumbled from her lips as she danced up and down in rage and excitement.

"Run along back to your mother, little side-partner. I'll talk with these men," said Professor Forbes, smiling as he laid his hand upon Jean's shoulder and gently but irresistibly turned her toward the house. "Yes, run along back. I'll see that Mammy comes out on top. Go in and have some candy ready for me. I'll need it after this racket," and with a funny nod and laugh he sent Jean upon her way and then turned to talk with the people from the circus,

and several representatives of the police force who had by this time arrived upon the scene.

Perhaps it is enough to know that "all's well that ends well," but those errant animals were speedily convinced of the error of their ways and marshaled back to their own domains, Mammy being mollified by a liberal remuneration for her ruined loaves and the damage done her property, although she and Charles spent the better part of the night restoring to order their desecrated habitation.

When peace once more descended upon the Carruth household, the family settled down to entertain their guest.

"Got my candy, Goldilocks? But—I say—where *are* they?" asked the Professor, at that moment becoming aware of Jean's shorn state, and looking with considerable concern at the little girl.

Explanations followed.

"Well—what next? Mammy Blairsdale has consented to change her name? That is almost too much to believe."

"You need not. Just wait until you see the sign Mr. Stuyvesant is having made for the counter. You will understand then that Blairsdale is still to the front," laughed Constance.

"Mammy will be a Blairsdale to the end," was Mrs. Carruth's amused answer.

"Glad I claim relationship in my grandmother. Good connections tell. I shall have to patronize the new business. By the way, I wonder if she'd take an order for a picnic luncheon? Two or three of us are getting up a little frolic for the Fourth, and that's what brought me over to-night. Will you chaperon us, Mrs. Carruth? I claim Miss Eleanor if she will honor me. Stuyvesant is going to ask Miss Constance to help him paddle *his* canoe and Jean—lassie? Who shall we have for you, little girl?"

"I don't want to be bothered with anybody. I'll go and come with mother and then I can be with whoever I like while I'm there," answered Jean with an independent toss of her head.

"Then you accept for all the others? Good! Is it settled, Mrs. Carruth? It will be a week from Monday, you know."

"Why it will give us great pleasure, but won't you let us do our share toward the feast?"

"Now that's all right. This is *our* picnic. You've picnicked *us* often enough right here in this house. Now it's our turn. So don't try to hold us up. Just let the bachelors have a chance to show what they *can* do. Got a great chum coming down from Yale and we'll turn out about twenty all told. But I must be off. I'll pow-wow with Mammy on my way," and with cordial good-nights he crossed the lawn to Mammy's quarters.

CHAPTER XIII.

An Unpleasant Suspicion.

The week had been the busiest one the Carruth household had known in many a day. Owing to Mammy's extraordinary departure and the excitement and preparation, the regular routine of their daily lives had been decidedly interrupted. Mrs. Carruth had devoted much time and thought to Mammy and Charles, as well as to laying plans for her own domestic welfare, for well she realized that with the present undertaking claiming her time, it would be utterly impossible for the old woman to attend to her household duties as formerly. She had, Mrs. Carruth knew, no intention of neglecting her "white folks," and her ability to accomplish a given amount of work was truly phenomenal. All this Mrs. Carruth freely admitted to herself, when going over the situation, but she also knew that there

was a limit to the amount of work even Mammy could do. She never questioned her energy or desire, but Mammy was now past sixty and certainly could not work as she was planning to. Every human being has her limitations.

So Mrs. Carruth decided to secure the services of a younger servant over whom Mammy could exercise supervision, and in the course of a few days the regal "Henrietta Maria" was installed as second maid, Mammy hardly knowing whether to regard her as an acquisition or an innovation. But there were just a *few* points upon which Mammy did *not* dispute her Miss Jinny when that same Miss Jinny chose to assert herself.

The point which was puzzling Mrs. Carruth most, however, was *why* upon earth Mammy had embarked upon such an enterprise at all. The old woman had a snug sum put safely away against the day she could no longer work, and she had with her white folks a life-time home. Until Hadyn Stuyvesant's visit no idea

of such a venture had entered her mind, nor had she apparently given Charles a thought until a partner was needed. What *was* at the bottom of it all? Certainly not the hope of preventing Eleanor from undertaking such a venture. That thought was too absurd. Mrs. Carruth was deeply puzzled.

During the week just passed Mammy had started her enterprise in good earnest, Charles at the Arcade doing his part with great success and a fine degree of mannerism, yet, with all his new business responsibilities, finding time to look closely to his Miss Constance's interests at the candy booth—*his* Miss Constance now, since he had wholly and entirely adopted Mammy's family.

In unconscious imitation of Mrs. Carruth's wisdom, Mr. Porter had promptly looked for someone to relieve Charles of the major portion of his duties, having felt for a long time that they were growing a little too heavy for the old man. At first Charles was inclined to resent the insinuation that he was unequal

to them, but Mr. Porter's tact half won the day, and the other half was won by the glorifying title, "Janitor in chief," with power to lord it over "Assistant Janitor." A little brief authority can do a great deal with the race.

Eleanor's week was filled with busy planning and work, for having fully decided to enter Radnor, certain preliminary steps were necessary thereto and entrance examinations had to be taken early in September. Meanwhile she was anxious to acquire something against the time when she would become a Freshman. This meant to bestir herself at once.

Constance in her little kitchen had worked to re-stock her counter, for the interruption of Mammy's wedding had sadly depleted the stock and prevented her from daily visiting her booth as she hoped to during her vacation days, and the returns had not come up to those of the foregoing weeks. She had hardly been to the Arcade at all during Mammy's wedding week, but had made several trips during the one just passed and discovered to her

dismay that a leakage was occurring somewhere. The number of boxes taken from the booth did not invariably correspond with the amount of change in her cash box. This was a new experience for Constance, for thus far her faith in her fellow-beings had never received any set-backs and all had gone well. Three times during the week just passed this discrepancy occurred. The boxes were gone, but their equivalent in cash was not in her box. Yet what could she do? Where place the blame? How discover the culprit?

One morning she was at her counter when Fred Grand came sauntering up. He did not see her for she was hidden by the case. Opening the little glass door he selected the box he wished and was about to turn from the counter when he caught sight of her, and coming to a standstill, said with some confusion:

"Ah, good morning, Miss Carruth. I didn't see you and you are so seldom over I was not on the lookout."

Constance smiled slightly at the formal "Miss Carruth." As a school-mate she had been either Miss Constance or simply Constance, even though no special friendship had ever existed between them, and she answered:

"I try to get over about three times a week. Since Mammy opened her lunch counter she has had her hands full, you know."

"Oh, yes, of course, certainly. Must keep you pretty busy, though, making and selling too. Rather hard lines for a girl I should think."

"It might be harder not to *have* it to do when one must put one's shoulder to the wheel," replied Constance, her face flushing slightly, for Fred Grand's patronizing tone irritated her, and so far as she could discover, or anyone else, *his* energy was not causing the river to smoulder.

A shrug of the shoulders was the only reply to this as the young man put his hand into his trousers' pocket and remarked:

"By the way, I'd better settle for this box of

candy. Oh, by Jove! I've come off without a cent. There, *that* comes of changing one's clothes in a hurry. I'll have to settle with you to-morrow. No end sorry. Deuced bore, but I hate to wear the same suit two days' hand-running. Feel like a confounded tramp, you know. Good-day," and the fastidious gentleman departed with his box to cross the passage-way to Miss Willing's booth where he was welcomed with effusion and his purchase accepted with many coy and flattering glances.

Constance's face was a study. Had she made an unpleasant discovery or was she unduly suspicious? She would not dwell upon it. It was too unpleasant, yet try as she would the episode kept continually recurring to her, and gave rise to anything but pleasant speculations. She knew Fred Grand's sisters very well, and his mother and her own were cordial friends, yet the laddie himself had never held her regard.

And so the week had passed and just what steps to take puzzled her more than she cared

to admit. True, her loss was insignificant, a dollar and eighty cents being no great sum to lose in a business venture, but the suspicion implanted rankled. She did not care to speak of it at home, for her suspicions were still too vague to take definite form, and she felt that her mother during the previous fall and winter had borne quite enough in the destruction of their old home and loss of her insurance upon it. Mrs. Carruth had barely recovered from the first stunning blow of her husband's death when the second calamity overtook her and forced her from the home in which she had spent the greater portion of her married life and which held such tender associations for her.

So Constance kept her own counsel and decided to take no further steps until her suspicions became convictions.

Jean, too, had been busy during the week, for her holidays had begun and she was free to go and come as she elected to. As Mammy was too deeply occupied with her preparations

for the lunch counter to give old Baltie much attention, Jean took the responsibility upon her own shoulders and devoted herself to the faithful old creature. It was quite coöperative for Baltie was useful even in his old age and blindness.

The Irving School was, of course, closed during the vacation weeks, but many of the boys lived in the vicinity and hailed with delight the reappearance of the blind old horse harnessed to the ancient phaeton and driven by the self-possessed, independent little body who during the springtime had come each Saturday morning to the Irving School with her packages of home-made candy. Jean was too wise to ever again venture through McKimm's Hollow and invite a repetition of her first experience when venturing into commercial circles. She chose the longer but safer route, and being by this time thoroughly familiar with every road and by-road, reached her destination, the Junior Field Club of East River-edge, where half the youthful population gath-

ered during these perfect June days. The instant Baltie's bay nose came into sight there was a stampede for the road from the tennis courts. Jean's business instincts had not misled her. The first to greet her was Knight Errant, otherwise known as Ned Faber, the handsome, gray-eyed laddie who had come to her rescue upon the memorable Town and Gown day.

"Hello! We thought we'd seen the last of you and Baltie when school closed," he cried. "Are you coming over just the same? Gee! but that's good," as his white even teeth sank into a particularly delicious bit of fudge, he meanwhile using his free hand to dive into the pocket of his white flannel trousers for the wherewithal to settle with the itinerant merchant.

"I can't promise," answered Jean, "but I guess I can come over once or twice a week. Seems as if everybody in our family had gone crazy about going into business or something. Do you know Mammy has opened a lunch counter in the Arcade?"

"No! Really? I bet two cents to a collar button she'll have some dandy stuff. Say, fellows, do you hear what Jean Carruth says? Let's make a break for the Arcade mighty soon. If Mammy's stuff is half as good as Miss Constance's, it'll be just great."

As usual the business flourished, and presently some of the girls who had found themselves minus partners upon the arrival of Jean's equipage and had grown rather tired of waiting for them to return, began to draw near, whereupon gallantry made extra purchases necessary and a new impetus was given to trade.

"Are you *really* Mrs. Carruth's little girl?" asked one extremely blonde-haired maiden, arrayed in garments of the very latest fashion, her hands and arms conspicuouly adorned with rings and bangles.

"Yes," answered Jean, looking her squarely in the eyes, for something in the emphasis given to the "really" rubbed her the wrong way.

"And she lets you chase all over the country *peddling* candy to everybody who wishes to buy it? How funny!"

"I *don't* sell it to *every*body who wishes to buy it. I only sell it to my friends."

"Oh! Really?" with the superior laugh of the fourteen years over twelve. "Well, let *me* have some, then. It's awfully good. I'll take two packages of the pralines," concluded the young lady as she turned to a boy standing near her, with an amused smile upon her face.

Jean's expression never altered, but with her big hazel eyes upon the speaker she answered:

"I've only two packages left, you see, and those are for *Ned*. You know I told you I never sold them to anybody *but* my friends. Here Ned, please take them, for I've got to go back home now."

Conventionalities are very elastic at fourteen years, and the laugh which rose from the boys was decidedly disconcerting to the young lady.

"You impertinent little snip," she retorted with a toss of the blonde head, as she whirled about to return to the tennis courts.

"Maybe it's better to be a snip and sell candy to my *friends* than to get all my money from ash cans," blazed Jean impetuously, for the young lady who had chosen to question the propriety of a Blairsdale's desire and little efforts to aid those she loved had but very recently succeeded in becoming a member of the East Riveredge Field Club, many of its members feeling that they would a little prefer not admitting to its circle the granddaughter of the man who had been the town's public scavenger, and who had amassed a fortune by government contracts which many felt to be hardly open to close investigation.

CHAPTER XIV.

A Picnic and What Came of It.

"The day we celebrate" dawned warm and hazy. A typical Independence Day. As the morning advanced the haze lifted and soft cottony clouds began to roll up in the northwest. Weatherwise folk would have predicted showers later in the day had any one been interested in their predictions, but who cared to think of showers when pleasanter possibilities filled every mind?

At ten o'clock a merry party gathered at the boat-house of the Riveredge Boat Club. Bluff Point, chosen for the picnic, lay about a mile above Riveredge upon the opposite bank of the river, an ideal spot. The party consisted of ten couples, with Mrs. Carruth to act as chaperon and Charles and Mammy to serve the luncheon, which the latter had been at great pains to prepare. Mammy was bursting with

pride, and the amount of time and care she had given to the preparation of that luncheon no one would ever guess. That she and Charles accompanied the picnic party was entirely an afterthought and the outcome of Homer Forbes' second interview with the old woman. At first it had not occurred to either, but in the course of his planning the Professor had impressed upon her the fact that being a legal holiday all business in South Riveredge would naturally be suspended and the Arcade closed. Consequently, neither her tempting lunches nor Charles' services would be in demand, and they might just as well turn an extra penny by preparing and serving the luncheon at the picnic. At first Mammy demurred. Charles, of course, could go, if "Massa Fo'bes" wished him to; he was entirely independent of any one's orders and could go and come as he saw fit. But Mammy's time belonged to her Miss Jinny. Professor Forbes was at some pains to conceal a smile at this statement in the face of Mammy's rather inde-

pendent actions. He had learned enough from Mrs. Carruth to realize pretty fully that Mammy's latest step had been taken without much time being wasted in consulting her Miss Jinny, and that Mammy was now more or less an independent factor, regulating her outgoings and incomings to suit herself.

A small launch was to carry Charles, Mammy and the luncheon to Bluff Point, the rest of the party going in canoes.

All was bustle and commotion when Charles and Mammy arrived upon the scene, followed by the local expressman with the boxes of luncheon, ice, an ice cream freezer and a great jar of lemonade.

"I say, Stuyvesant, look after the canoes and the folks while I get Charles, Mammy and the luncheon aboard the launch, will you?" called the Professor as he hurried over to the old couple. "Look sharp, will you, and hustle that stuff aboard. You help him Charles. Come on, Mammy. I want to see you settled in the launch before we put off."

"What I gotter go in, Massa Fo'bes? Not dat nutshell what bobbin roun' yonder, is I?" asked Mammy, regarding the little naphtha launch with small favor.

"Why, you aren't afraid of it, are you, Mammy?"

"Dunno as I'se zactly 'fraid, but it do look mighty lak it gwine tu'n bottom-side up if I draws my breff too deep down."

"Nonsense! It's as safe as a house. Come along, Miss Constance will tell you it's a capital little craft, won't you?" he asked.

"You'll be as safe as you are in your cabin, Mammy. Safer, I reckon, because you'll be quite free from the visits of wild beasts," laughed Constance, coming over to Mammy's side to lay her hand upon her arm.

"Huh! de beasteses didn't hurt *me* none, and *dey* was on de groun' where I could *run*. But if dis yere boat tek ter cuttin' up whar we all gwine run to?"

"It won't cut up, Mammy, so get aboard and don't delay Professor Forbes. Charles has

everything ready, you see, and we are only waiting for you," urged Constance.

"Well, I 'spose I'se in de han's ob de Lawd if I'se huntin' wild beasteses, or in dat wambly boat, so I gotter make a move."

By the concerted efforts of Professor Forbes and Constance on the float and Charles, who was already in the launch, Mammy was finally gotten on board, where she collapsed upon the stern seat and held on with both hands as though expecting each moment to be her final one.

Mrs. Carruth and Constance went in Hadyn Stuyvesant's canoe, Eleanor and Jean in Professor Forbes', the other men and girls following in line behind their hosts, whose canoes set the course.

Bluff Point was a delightful spot for a picnic, situated as it was upon a pretty bay with the broad sweep of the river before it. Happily for Mammy's peace of mind, there was an excellent little dock at which the launch and canoes could make a landing and no mishaps

befall. The luncheon was carried up to a small grove and Charles and Mammy at once set about their preparations for serving it, Mammy stating with characteristic philosophy: "We better hab de dinner reddy befo' dey all's hongrey, den dey all hongrey befo' de dinner's reddy."

If Mammy had planned to advertise her skill as a caterer she could hardly have succeeded better than by the excellence of this picnic luncheon. She had prepared a feast for the gods, and Charles served it with the air of a major-domo.

In spite of all protests upon the Professor's part that he, and he alone, should provide the feast, Constance had brought with her a large box of her candies and when the more substantial portion of the feast had been disposed of, she produced her box.

"Oh, I say, Miss Constance, this is all against rules and regulations you know. We said it was to be *our* feast, with no outside contributions. If we are all made ill by an over-

supply of good things you must be held accountable," cried Homer Forbes as the box was passed around. "Here, Rockwell, I want you to try some of these candies Miss Constance makes. Greatest stuff you ever ate."

"Why, yes—certainly. I shall be delighted, since you assure me they are made by Miss Constance's own hands. Ordinarily I entirely eschew sweets as *most* unwholesome, don't you know. I find myself the victim of severe headaches if I partake of them, and singularly enough, I can not bear to be in the presence of those who indulge too freely, I am so sympathetic," answered the eminent Professor Rockwell, the class-mate of whom Homer Forbes had spoken.

"Yes, I know you were somewhat susceptible to external influences when we were at Yale," answered Professor Forbes rather drily, a curious twinkle creeping into his eyes, although his face was quite grave.

"Now really, Forbes, *do* you recall that? Yes, it is quite true. Odors affect me keenly;

the tones of my friends' voices can make me happy or miserable; atmospheric conditions affect my spirits, and an entire day can be marred for me by my sympathies being played upon. It is most deplorable. Really it is," answered Rockwell seriously.

"Pretty bad case, I should think," said Hadyn Stuyvesant, tossing two or three pieces of fudge into Jean's lap as she sat between him and the all too susceptible Professor Rockwell, after whose name trailed enough letters to form an alphabet all by themselves, A.M., D.C.L., D.Sc., F.A.S., F.G.S., being only a few of them.

"Yes, really is it not?" asked Rockwell quite seriously. "Why, do you know not long since I was visiting some friends whose daughter was suffering from a felon upon her finger, and I actually experienced all the torture she was enduring, and when it had finally to be operated upon I was quite ill from pain."

"I don't think you ought to go where there is illness of any sort whatsoever. It's rather

hard lines to have to bear a headache for another fellow," laughed Hadyn, darting an amused glance at Constance across the improvised table.

"Oh, I hope no one will fall ill to-day. I should hate to have your pleasure spoiled, Professor Rockwell," she said, her face filled with deep concern, but her eyes telling their own tale to Hadyn.

"It is really quite unfortunate, Miss Constance. I can never tell. I am often attacked quite suddenly with these sympathetic ailments. Really, right now my temples are throbbing most unpleasantly, and there is a sense of fullness in my head. I fear someone present is threatened with a violent headache after this too beautiful repast. Ah, I thought so. I am *so* susceptible. My poor little girl, I knew it. Let me press my hands to your throbbing temples," he said, turning to Jean, who at that moment seemed to be somewhat uncomfortable, but whether from the Professor's description of his imaginary ailments or some very

real ones of her own, due to an over-generous luncheon, Constance, who glanced quickly toward her, could not decide.

Before she could interfere, however, and avert the climax she felt was inevitable, Jean's patience, never over-elastic, snapped. Springing to her feet she cried:

"Headache! I wish it *was* only a headache, but I've eaten too much of that strawberry ice and it's given me such a pain in my *stomach* I don't know what to do, and I'm going straight to Mammy."

Perhaps it was just as well that some one opportunely proposed canoeing at that moment, and a general move was made toward the river.

"May I paddle you up to the Glen, Miss Constance? I paddled up there last week and it seemed never to have looked so beautiful," said Hadyn.

"I'd love to go. I haven't been there in a long time," answered Constance.

"Will you come, too, Mrs. Carruth?"

"No, thank you. I've brought a book with me, and I'm going up to that pine grove to luxuriate. It suits my years better than scrambling through that wild glen," laughed Mrs. Carruth.

"Sorry you won't join us. Good-by for an hour or so, then," and waving a cheery farewell he and Constance went down to the little craft dancing so lightly upon the water, where Professor Forbes had already settled Eleanor in his canoe, and Professor Rockwell was assisting a near-sighted young woman of highly intellectual countenance into another.

"You will have to be the pilot, Forbes, you know I'm quite a stranger to the attractions of this region, and Miss Morris tells me that she, too, is only a visitor," called Professor Rockwell to his friend.

"Why, yes. Of course. With pleasure. Where would you like to go, Miss Carruth?"

"If we are to be pilots wouldn't it be interesting to show Professor Rockwell the Kettles? They are always interesting to strangers, and

would be particularly so to Professor Rockwell and Miss Morris."

So toward the "Kettles," a curious geological formation a short way up the river paddled Professor Forbes and Eleanor, Professor Rockwell and Miss Morris following close behind.

It was not very far and presently the canoes were run up on the sandy beach and the party made their way to the great holes in the rocks, known as the Kettles; probably the result of glacial erosion. Had Eleanor been able to foresee the result of her suggestion she would, undoubtedly, have hesitated some time before making it. No sooner had Professor Rockwell come upon this curious rock formation than everything else fled from his thoughts, and he was ages deep in the Glacial Period, and, alas! for the result of perverse example, carrying his friend along with him. Eleanor did her best to follow, but was soon overwhelmed by such a maelstrom of scientific knowledge bristling with rampant terms that she gave it up in

despair, and seating herself upon a rock listened in a sort of dazed state of mind to the big words rattling about her like hailstones. As the two men waxed warm in their discussion, Miss Morris, whose fad was botany, strolled off in quest of specimens.

With arms linked and heads together the two men hovered over the great cavities, gradually moving farther and farther away from Eleanor, and apparently entirely oblivious of her presence.

Should she follow them or not? Perhaps the Blairsdale blood decided the question, as with a sigh of resignation she let her hands fall into her lap and broke into a low laugh.

Miss Morris had long since disappeared down the path skirting the shore which, if she followed far enough, as Eleanor devoutly hoped she would, must lead her straight back to Bluff Point.

When Eleanor came to this point in her train of thought a low rumble of thunder suggested a livelier source of diversion.

CHAPTER XV.

In the Glen.

Meanwhile at the camp upon Bluff Point, Mrs. Carruth, made comfortable by the shawls and pillows arranged for her by Hadyn before he and Constance set out for the Glen, was luxuriating as one can only do under such conditions. A perfect summer day, a pine grove redolent of aromatic odors, feathery branches of the softest green overhead, and above them "white sheep" rolling up out of the west. Off in the distance the beautiful river flowing, flowing, flowing ever onward toward the great ocean beyond.

Curled up in her nest is it any wonder Mrs. Carruth let the magazine lie idly upon her lap and found greater entertainment in "Nature, the dear old muse, who sang to her . . . . the rhymes of the Universe?"

The other picnickers had wandered away in

as many different directions as they numbered. Jean was strolling about gathering black-eyed Susans and the other wild flowers with which the pasture lands beyond abounded.

"Don't stray too far away, sweetheart," Mrs. Carruth called after her, as Jean climbed a rail fence and dropped into the tall, lush grass upon the farther side.

"I won't, I'm not going out of sight of the camp. I can see Mammy's turban all the time and Charles' gray noddle," laughed Jean as she waved her hand to Mammy who, upon hearing her name mentioned, bobbed up from the hampers over which she and Charles were bending.

"Wha' dat yo' sayin'?" she called, for Mammy's ears were keen for every word from her baby.

"I'm going to keep a watch-out for *your* turban and Charles' snowball-noddle; at least the part of it that *is* snowbally; most of it's like a chocolate Easter egg; it's so shiny," cried Miss Incorrigible, for she had not been slow

to discover that Mammy was immensely proud of her latest matrimonial venture and ready to fly to arms if Charles came in for censure or banter.

"Easter aig!" echoed Mammy instantly enraged. "Is yo' fo'get wha' happen to de chillern wha' poke fun at de good man in de Bible? Yo' better had stop nigh dis hyer camp; yo' ain' know wedder dere's any *b'ars* yonder in dem fiel's or no, an' yo's de livin' fa'r bait fo' 'em wid yo' sassiness."

But Jean evidently had no fears of vengeance from such a source and, with a prance of defiance for Mammy, dropped from sight in the tall grass.

Feeling pretty sure that her own words, if not Mammy's, would restrain Jean from wandering too far afield, Mrs. Carruth lapsed back into her day-dreams which, thanks to the soporific influence of her surroundings, shortly became real dreams which lasted until some time later when a rude awakening brought her to her feet.

When the various dishes and luncheon paraphernalia had been washed and packed away to their mutual satisfaction, Mammy and Charles carried all down to the little dock to await the return of the launch at five o'clock, then seating themselves upon a wooden box close to the edge of the dock watched the placid river and talked in low tones of many recent happenings. A little way down the shore a group of men and girls were talking and laughing together, but no other sounds broke the restful woodsey silence. As Mammy and Charles looked up the river they saw Hadyn Stuyvesant's canoe gliding slowly away toward the little cove which led into the glen, his strong, muscular arms wielding the paddle with perfect rhythm and ease. He had removed his white flannel coat and hat, and laid them in the bottom of the canoe, and rolled up the sleeves of his negligée shirt in order to have perfect freedom of motion. As the soft wind blew his wavy hair back from his broad, fine forehead he was good to look at, this man

not yet twenty-four, propelling the canoe through the water with the long, slow, easy strokes that tell. The sunlight played upon his hair and face, bringing a soft color into his clear complexion; a complexion which told of a clean, well-ordered life, as did the eyes, with their straightforward glance. There was strength of purpose, force, ability and purity of soul in their gaze. Perhaps the mouth was just a trifle sensitive, but it had fine, firm lines withal, and manhood can never be the less manhood because of a slight degree of sensitiveness which must prove a leavening for its sterner qualities, and go far toward helping it understand the emotions which often dominate the opposite sex.

"I never come up here without feeling that I ought to 'thank the Lord for a life so sweet,' as Jean Ingelow puts it," he said to the girl facing him. "There is something about the place more uplifting to the soul than all the Cathedrals in Christendom. Wasn't it Bryant who said: 'The groves were God's first

temples?' I think he was about right, too. Just look at the light through those pines. George! how can a man have in his soul a thought that doesn't match it?"

The delicately-molded, softly-colored face before him was quick to reflect the spirit which the influence of the hour had aroused. The deep, dark eyes were alight with appreciation, as Constance answered:

"I am glad you feel its influence, Mr. Stuyvesant. It is a pretty good old world after all, and perhaps the sad hours which are sure to come to all of us as we journey along only serve to emphasize the sunshiny ones. I have always loved the river and all its nooks, for every rod of the shore seems to be identified with my life. You know we have never journeyed very far away. Father had planned to take us all abroad when Nornie and I graduated and I can't imagine any greater possible pleasure for him, he did so love to do things for other people. But who knows? Maybe I shall be able to carry out his wishes if I succeed

in my 'sweet career,' as Professor Forbes calls it. Only think what it would mean to me to feel that *I* had been the one to do it," and Constance's face testified to her enthusiasm.

"If will and energy combined can compass it I think you will realize your dreams," said Hadyn as he deftly turned the prow of the canoe into the cove, beached it and asked:

"Can you get ashore dryshod while I hold her steady? I wish I could be in two places at once, but since I can't, perhaps I'd better see to it that we keep right side up."

"Just watch me. When I get to be forty, perhaps I'll be portly and ponderous and canoes will be memories only—or *ought* to be for the peace of mind of their owners—but now——" and two or three light springs landed her safely upon the shingly beach where she, quickly turning, laid hold of the bow with her strong, slender fingers, crying:

"Take a brace and heave-ho! All together!" and landed the canoe well up out of

water as Hadyn supplemented the pull with a vigorous push with his paddle.

"Good! That's great!" he cried, his eyes filling with admiration for the lithe, graceful girl as he sprang nimbly ashore and drew the canoe up beyond all possible danger of tide or wind. Then joining her as she stood waiting for him a few feet away, he said:

"Now, let's follow the brook up to the falls above, where we can sit in that wonderful afternoon twilight and enjoy the beauty of it. Perhaps, though, we won't have the pleasure of enjoying it without interruption. Do you see that rowboat over yonder? Wonder whose it is? None of our party came in a boat. Must be strangers. Do you recognize the boat, Miss Constance?"

"No, it is a strange one to me," answered Constance, and the next moment forgot all about it as she scrambled up the rocky glen beside Hadyn, glad now and again of his ready hand to help her up some particularly steep ascent. About a quarter of a mile in from the

shore the brook came tumbling over a ledge of rock probably thirty feet high, roaring, splashing and gurgling with all the ado and commotion of a baby Niagara, and sending its spray high in the air to form fairy rainbows in the slanting sunbeams which filtered through the dense foliage of pine, white birch and hemlock.

At the top of the ledge was a natural rock basin in which the water was dammed before it bounded away to freedom over the rocks, and here great moss-covered stones and prone forest giants, which had fallen before the wintry storms, formed natural seats; a favorite resting place for those who visited the glen and were hardy enough to clamber up the rough trail. Seating herself upon an old tree trunk, as Hadyn stretched himself at length upon a rocky ledge close to the water's edge, Constance looked off through the twilight vista of forest, exquisite in the greens of a westering sun. She almost forgot her companion's presence as he amused himself by tossing twigs into the mirror-like pool to see them instantly

carried toward the brink by the apparently motionless water and whirled away over the falls.

She was quick to feel the beauty all about her and as yet Psyche had not found her soul. The man near her was just a warm loyal friend whom she admired and respected; whom her mother made welcome in their home, both for his own sake and for his mother's, whom she had known in girlhood. It was pleasant to be here with him, to feel that he enjoyed her friendship as she enjoyed his, but there it ended, for Constance, while able and womanly in many respects, was still a girl at heart—not yet seventeen—although she was contributing very materially to the comfort of those she loved.

Hadyn watched her expressive face without seeming to do so, and respected her mood enough to refrain from breaking in upon her thought. The years between sixteen and twenty-four equal double that number in later life.

Presently Constance came back to her surroundings with a start, and, coloring slightly, said:

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Stuyvesant. I didn't realize how I had wandered off in this dreamland and left you to play with twigs by way of amusement."

"And I didn't know I *was* playing with twigs, so we can cry quits on that score. I don't wonder you feel the influence of it all, though; it *is* wonderful. Every time I come here I give way entirely to its fascinations. There is only one other place I know of that has a similar influence upon me, and that is thousands of miles from here: a little spot hidden away in the Tyrol, sidetracked from travel and known to very few. It is so beautiful! I went there two years ago and some day I am going again, but to enjoy it to the full one must have a companion. My college chum was with me then. Who will be with me when I go again time must decide."

"I hope it will be some one who will appreci-

ate it as you can. How splendid it must be to be able to go prancing off any minute and to any part of the world you take a fancy to prance to!" was Constance's light-hearted comment. "Who knows? Some day, maybe, I shall be able to go and take all my people along, too. *How* I'd love to! Mother and father traveled a good deal when they were first married and I used to love to start her reminiscencing, but I haven't done so since—father went away; it's too hard for her——"

Constance paused suddenly and turned away. Hadyn half started toward her, his face filled with a light she could hardly have understood, but checked himself and shifted his position to lean against the log upon which she sat; he said:

"You will do it if you resolve to. You have the energy and ambition which spell success. You have given pretty good proof of that. As to the little mother, *that* chapter in her life can not be changed, but we must do what we can to make the concluding ones happy for her.

She has given me much in her friendship and warm welcome to her home which I shall try to repay. If I can win her love also, part of my ache of the past eighteen months will be lessened."

"You *have* done that, Mr. Stuyvesant, more, I think, than you realize. Mother is reserved with most people, but she has surely taken you into a corner of her heart," said Constance, turning to look at the strong face near her—a face full of sympathy which the girl was quick to feel. The steadfast eyes held a suspicion of emotion restrained by a man's self-control.

"Then I am to be envied, but I wonder if I can't come a little closer to that home circle? You know the old saying that where an inch is yielded voluntarily a mile is claimed arbitrarily. Can't you drop the formal Mr. Stuyvesant and let the Christian name make me realize the chumminess of our friendship? So few call me by that name nowadays and I miss it more than you can guess. Sometimes I feel

like a regular Methuselah with all the 'Mr. Stuyvesants' bristling around me, and you know I won't be twenty-four until next September. Can you do this and persuade the others to do it also? It will be a greater kindness than you can understand. Since my aunt left Riveredge I'm a 'grave and reverend Seignior' to most people and I don't think I enjoy the rôle."

"Why of course I will if you wish it. We nearly always think of you by your Christian name and often speak of you by it. It won't be so very hard, I'm sure. So far as I am concerned we will drop the formal Mr. and Miss right now and I am sure mother and Nornie will gladly do so. As for Jean?—she is so much younger I wonder if she ought," hesitated Constance.

"Have you forgotten the name she voluntarily suggested? She is 'little sister,' you know, so let her choose her own name for me. She is my 'ain little lassie' and our friendship is on an *old* foundation—Baltie," laughed Hadyn.

"A quarter of a century *is* a pretty good test, but do you know it's clouding over and unless I'm much mistaken I heard an ominous muttering off yonder in the west. Goodness, if a shower comes up we *are* in for a ducking."

"By George, I believe you're right! Let's get back to the canoe and friends. Come by this path. It is a little shorter than the one we came by."

They turned into a path leading around the pool and made their way through the dense undergrowth which in places almost barred their progress. At their feet tall brakes grew nearly waist high. Hadyn led the way, pushing aside boughs and ferns to clear Constance's path. They had gone about half the distance down the steep descent when a sudden turn in the path brought them almost headlong upon a man and a girl. He was resting against a rock and she reclining within his encircling arm, her head upon his shoulder, his face against hers.

Hadyn paused suddenly, flushed to his eye-

brows, and strove to prevent Constance from rushing upon a spectacle so at variance with all her womanly instincts, but it was too late. Not one word was spoken by either, and the next second Constance, crimson to the little locks of hair waving upon her forehead, was hurrying down to the canoe, leaving Miss Willing and Fred Grand to their own thoughts. If one could judge by the ringing, defiant laugh which followed her and Hadyn they were not "as deep as a well."

CHAPTER XVI.

Jean Plays Mazeppa.

The thunder heads which had been lazily rolling up all day had at last joined forces low in the west, and now, massed into dark, threatening clouds, were creeping upward at a deceptive rate, low mutterings giving dire warning to those with ears to hear, eyes to see, and wits to understand; a phenomenon which nature repeats again and again to her heedless children. Why is it, then, that so many continue to be heedless until she lays a stilling hand upon their hearts? So many live to be old men and women yet never learn to heed her warning signals and regularly come in for the thorough drenching they so richly merit. People go strolling about until a shower is actually upon them and then assume an injured air when a deluge suddenly descends: A situation which one may witness a hundred times

either in town or country during the season of showers. Old ladies prancing wildly off toward shelter; nurse maids frantically wheeling or dragging their charges home; stately dames, with consternation depicted upon their countenances, gather up their voluminous draperies and imitate the panic-stricken cow; young people scurrying away, half enjoying the prospect of a shower-bath, garments nevertheless and notwithstanding. And all because?

"I didn't notice."

On Bluff Point Mammy and Charles sat enjoying the sunset of life, with "all the landscape of their lives" stretched "behind" "and sweet memories rising like a tender haze" to "magnify the objects they beheld." Their backs were turned toward the gathering clouds.

Mrs. Carruth, lulled by the music of the pines and soothed by the balsamic air, slept as calmly as a little child. The other members of the party had strolled away. Jean was the only one wholly and actively alive to the infinite

sources of entertainment at hand. Great clusters of black-eyed Susans were gathered and laid in a pile ready to carry down to the canoe, later to adorn the rooms at home. Then other field flowers and grasses were added to the collection, a deserted hang-bird's nest and a dozen other treasures. By the time these were collected that particular form of natural history began to lose attraction, and my lady turned to seek fresh fields and pastures new. She did not have to seek far. Off beyond the field in which she had been wandering for the past half hour lay an upland; a great stretch of field dotted here and there with huge boulders, clumps of sumach, and now and again a stately old oak. The fence encircling the field in which Jean roamed skirted the pasture, but that broad stretch of upland was not inclosed by a fence—a ramshackle stone wall did duty. In many places it was washed down by the winter torrents which rushed from the mountain above, tumbling the stones thither and yonder.

Jean mounted her rail fence and looked over. All was silent and deserted. Now and again a cricket shrilled, or a grasshopper whirred its crazy flight, but no further sign of life was to be seen. Far off in the distance an unmusical terclank, terclank indicated a cow's presence. As Jean sat there trying to decide what she would do next the sound drew nearer and nearer and presently a beautiful little Alderney heifer came in sight. She paused a moment to look at Jean with her great deer-like eyes, but as Jean kept perfectly still the little animal evidently decided that she was some new sort of specimen of the animal kingdom and quite harmless, so lowering her head again she began to graze upon the tufts of clover, drawing gradually nearer and nearer to the little girl.

Now it need hardly be stated at this stage of Jean's history that anything navigating upon *four* legs could fail to arouse her keen interest, and this particular little beastie was certainly a beauty. She was probably twelve

or thirteen hands high, slight and graceful as a deer, and of the wonderful color a young Alderney cow alone boasts. Jean fairly ached to go to her, but felt pretty certain that any move upon her part would scare Miss Bossy out of her juvenile wits. Still Bossy manifested no fear of the biped perched upon the fence and presently raising her head, looked at her long and earnestly. Then, wonder of wonders, walked straight up to her. Jean nearly flew to bits with delight.

"So Bossy! So Bossy! Coo, Coo," she crooned in her most persuasive tones and Bossy consented to respond. Drawing gingerly nearer and nearer she at length stretched forth her head toward Jean and smelled with long, audible inhalations. Perhaps some scent of old Baltie lingered about Jean's garments to reassure her, for Jean had run out to give Baltie a farewell hug before leaving. At any rate little Bossy's head was presently in the little girl's encircling arms, and the spot between the tiny, budding horns was being scratched and

rubbed in a manner to hypnotize any cow—or goat—for everybody who knows anything of these animals understands how they will stand for hours to have their heads rubbed. Jean rubbed, scratched, talked and crooned alternately in the foolish way women have whether they be big or little: The maternal instinct is born with them. Bossy grew foolish by the minute and scrooched up closer and closer. Jean's raptures grew in proportion. Oh, if Pandora could only have been content to let well enough alone!

But Bossy was at the bottom of the next suggestion. As she drew nearer and nearer she presses heavily and more heavily against Jean's legs, and the pressure crushed them against the rail fence upon which she sat. She tried to draw them up but could not and her inability to get *both* up suggested trying to free one, and so lessen her discomfort. Fatal move! Up came the left leg but where should it be rested? Only *one* place was available; Bossy's sleek back, round and fat from many days

passed in the rich pasture land. A quiver passed over Jean, and into her eyes sprung the look which Mammy called the "debbil-may-care" one. The next second she sat upon Bossy's back.

Perhaps earthquakes "arrive" more suddenly and create a greater rumpus. It is doubtful. Perhaps Mazeppa's steed was more terrified by his burden and his careerings were wilder. That, too, is doubtful. We are told that the white bull upon which the fair Europa was carried away ambled gently off with his burden. Bossy had no idea of ambling with hers. She belonged to a gentleman whose home was on the opposite side of the river and had been brought across to this luscious pasture in a large flatboat only a few weeks before. Possibly she still remembered her old home and like most young creatures in distress, longed to get back to its shelter in her hour of stress. Animals are not credited with deep reasoning powers—cows claim none at all, I think.

The river lay in sight, the stone wall under

ordinary circumstances would have bounded Miss Bossy's ramblings, for the pasture was a large one, but the impetus now given was beyond her wildest ideas of the possible. Barely had Jean slipped into her seat when a wild bellow of protest gave evidence of Bossy's point of view regarding such liberties, and the impromptu circus was on. A monkey—given human speech—might possibly have explained how Jean stuck fast as her steed went careering over that pasture, but stick she did, although Bossy resorted to every method known to her cow-mind to dislodge her undesired burden.

Around and around they circled, Jean hugging and hanging on for dear life, but never uttering a sound—Bossy and her bell were making enough for both—until at length the little heifer came to one of the breaks in the wall, when over she went like a deer and tore madly toward the river. But alack! Just at the spot where the wild bound was made some enterprising hornets had constructed one of

their paper castles, hanging it to the bough of a wild cherry tree. Bossy's rampant tail slashed against it, demolishing it instanter.

All that had gone before was mere child's play. Hornets resent interference with their domestic affairs. These were new to housekeeping and their abode but just completed. In one little minute they got busy and rushed to avenge their castle's destruction.

A minute later Mrs. Carruth was aroused from her peaceful dreams by jangling bells, wild shrieks and mad bellowings to see a most fearsome object tear by her like the fabled werewolf, and go rushing toward the river, leaving behind a stinging evidence of its passage, for the hornets which hovered over their enemy like a dark cloud were quite ready to include any new object.

Serenely unaware of what was happening, Mammy and Charles were sitting upon the dock, harking back to the old days spent upon the plantation; recalling incidents long forgotten by both until this reunion after such a

lapse of years made them again stand forth as vividly in their memories as upon the day they had taken place. Charles was saying:

"Yas, Lutie, I suah *does* recomlect de day I done got de power ob relig'n, I does. Yo' was on da mo'ners' bench, an' when I see yo' a settin' dar, all so meek and humbly, I ses ter masef: 'Charles, Charles Devon, is yo' 'spect fer ter jine wid dat gal yander? Yo' ain't fitten fer ter walk long side her in *dis* hyer worl', let lone in de nex' lessen yo' pu'ify yo'sef right dis minit'. An' den I ups an' maks a bre'k fo' de bench, but, bress Gawd, befo' I done got dar ol' Sis Kasie *she* done got one ob her tantrums an' —well dat congregatiom, an' de minister jist natchelly got all *dey* wanter tackle, and I say: 'Charles, yo' let 'em rastle wid Sis Kasie's debble, kase he's one mighty 'streprous one and dey needs all dey strength fo' *him*.' Is yo' member it, Honey?"

"Member! Member!" repeated Mammy scornfully, for she still vividly recalled the lengths to which "Sis Kasie's debbil" could

now and again whirl that individual. More than once had protracted meetings been held by the United Zionists to exorcise that rampant spirit, but Sis Kasie was well nigh despaired of, for her debbil was a stubborn one and bided with her in spite of the most impassioned exhortations. "Yas, I 'members; I has reason to. Didn't de minister an' Brother Gustus jist natchelly wrastle wid dat pesterin' sperret twell—bang!—out he come an' fly froo' de air like a gre't black tar'ifyin' beast" (neither Mammy nor the congregation had been in a state of mind to draw clear conclusions upon that occasion, and it is doubtful if any single individual of the number gathered there to pray for Sis Kasie's reclamation was sufficiently calm to grasp the fact that the fearsome object which had gone tearing and bellowing through their midst at that opportune moment (not in the air) was nothing more nor less than Mr. Stark's black bull, tormented to madness by the gadflies which had descended upon him as he peacefully grazed). "An' dat's de las'

we ever *is* see ob him. But bress ma' soul, I ain't never *is* ter fergit it. I kin see it yit when I'se sort ob, ob—pestered in ma min', an' I'ze mos' scared ter deaf lessen ma *own* sins fin' me out. Is yo' think we's *all* got sich debbils as ole' Kasie's, Charles?"

Mammy never learned Charles' belief upon the subject for at that moment came a clap of thunder and a fearful commotion arose just behind the old couple. Poor Mammy! Surely her sins *had* found her out, for there was a rush, a bellow, an impact which sent Charles and the box one way, and swept her like a whirlwind across the narrow breadth of dock and into the river before a pulse could beat two. Luckily the river was shallow just there and when Mammy came spluttering to her feet the water was not above her arm pits, although she was terrified to the point of imbecility by the sight which confronted her: Not two feet from her face, and staring at her with eyes nearly popping from their sockets, was a decidedly *cowed* little cow, very wet, very de-

jected, entirely forlorn, and bellowing piteously to be rescued from a watery grave. On the dock just above her Charles was picking himself up, and Jean lay screaming at the top of her lungs, having been dumped heels over head from her charger by the impact.

From every direction under the sun rushed the members of the picnic party, and down the river, as though paddled for life itself, came Hadyn's canoe.

Perhaps we ought to draw a curtain upon the happenings of the ensuing fifteen minutes. The shower instead of proving a calamity proved a blessing. Mammy could not be any wetter than she already was, Bossy waded forth from her spacious bathtub and with a bellow of joy and a hilarious flourish of her tail made a break for her pasture. Charles, once assured that his bride was not "drownded daid," began to wring out her dripping garments, and all got into the canoes to hurry to the opposite shore, the launch arriving most opportunely and carrying Charles,

Mammy and Jean toward home as fast as its puffing engine could.

"Are we *all* here?" cried Mrs. Carruth, as the last canoe was about to put off. "Where are Eleanor, Miss Morris, Professor Forbes and Professor Rockwell?"

As an answer to her question, Miss Morris at that moment came hurrying down to the dock, her arms filled with a motley collection of weeds. "Wait for me! Oh, *please* wait for me!" she wailed. She was hurried into one of the canoes, as Mrs. Carruth demanded: "But where are Eleanor and the men?"

"She is with them. I left them to botanize."

"Don't worry, Mrs. Carruth, they will look out for her, and have no doubt already started for home," were Hadyn's reassuring words, and in spite of many misgivings Mrs. Carruth was forced to accept that conclusion and start homeward with the others.

CHAPTER XVII.

When the Storm Broke.

The thunder which had acted as a rallying summons to the picnic party, and caused Eleanor to wonder whether its warning would penetrate ears thrilling to the scientific speculations of first one learned mortal and then the other, was speedily followed by rain drops. Luckily the launch and canoes reached the Riveredge boat-house before the full force of the storm broke upon the occupants, but their concern regarding the fate of those left upon the opposite shore was very great: There was absolutely no shelter available. Mrs. Carruth strove to conceal her anxiety, but Hadyn was fully alive to its extent and sympathized with her, while Constance did all in her power to ease her mind by saying that she felt sure the men would find some means of sheltering Eleanor from the force of the storm. But Jean,

Charles and Mammy were nearly beside themselves. There was nothing to do but send the old colored people on to their home, for Mammy was in a fair way to catch her death cold, and Charles too distracted to be of the slightest use to anyone. Jean went with them, rolled up in an old rain-coat lent by the boat-house attendant. But the others remained to watch for the stragglers. When the storm was at its worst and the rain pelting down in such sheets that objects fifty yards across the water could barely be discerned, a canoe was seen battling its way toward the boat-house. It was impossible under such conditions to distinguish the occupant, but Mrs. Carruth, who had not left the window of the boat-house for one single instant, began to pluck up her hope although it seemed floating upon a very frail craft. Propelled by swift, powerful strokes, the canoe drew nearer and nearer, but, to their entire consternation, Mrs. Carruth and Hadyn soon discovered that it held only one person.

"By all that's foolhardy, what next!" mut-

tered Hadyn as he rushed from the boat-house, calling as he did so: "Look out for the little mother, Constance."

Perhaps in a calmer moment some surprise might have been manifested by those who overheard his words, but just then every one was too deeply concerned for Eleanor's safety.

"Stand by to lay hold," shouted Professor Forbes, as he guided the pitching canoe up to the float. "Stiff wind! Bad storm!"

"Bad storm!" echoed Hadyn, his temper utterly routed. "What in thunder have you done with Miss Carruth? She went with *you*. Now where *is* she?" and no gentle yank was given the canoe as it swung alongside the float.

"Miss Carruth? Isn't she here with the party? She and Miss Morris were together when Rockwell and I were inspecting the Kettles—"

"Here! No! How could she *get* here? She's probably over yonder this minute and soaked through and through. By George! I'd

like—" but just what Hadyn Stuyvesant would like to do he left untold.

"Oh, now this is really a most distressing situation. Really, very deplorable," cried the bewildered Forbes as he scrambled from the tossing canoe, and began vaguely to wring his drenched coat as he stood upon the dock in the deluging downpour.

"Give me that paddle," commanded Hadyn, snatching up the paddle Forbes had dropped upon the dock at his feet.

"Where are you going? What are you about to do?" demanded Professor Forbes, as though half dazed by the startling developments of the past three minutes.

"Go after Eleanor Carruth, of course, you confounded chump! Either get back into the canoe and help me paddle, or clear out. If your scientific researches are going to make such a blamed idiot of you, you'd better cut them out. Now quick! Do one thing or the other, for I've no time to waste words when that girl is over yonder in the woods getting drowned by

the minute, and likely enough half scared to death, as her mother and sister are. They are nearly frantic about her. Hustle, I say!"

"Oh, where *are* you men going? Where *are* you?" cried Constance at that moment, rushing toward them from the boat-house.

"After Eleanor, of course. Now, Forbes, put up your 'varsity stroke for all you're worth," was the command as the canoe shot forward under Hadyn's powerful strokes, Forbes rallying mightily under the impetus of the sharp words and his own stinging conscience.

The rate at which that canoe was forced into the very teeth of wind and wave and sent rushing toward Bluff Point would have done credit to steam power. Hadyn handled the stern paddle and his face was white and set as he made each stroke; his lips compressed and grim, for he had no time to waste words upon the man who had let his wits go a-wool-gathering at the cost of others' comfort, safety and peace of mind.

They had gone about one-half the distance when, through the pelting rain, they made out a rowboat heading toward them. It was a cockle-shell craft rowed by a man who was far too slight for the struggle with wind and wave, and the burden of two girls, whose weight sank the boat almost to the gunwales, and although the laddie struggled valiantly, it was very evident to the men in the canoe that the battle was against him. Hadyn was the first to recognize the occupants of the boat, and his face if possible turned a shade whiter as he shouted:

"Hold steady a minute longer, Grand, and we'll lend a hand!"

Hardly had the words left his lips when snap! went one of the spindle-like spoon oars, and the rower pitched backward from the recoil. Then everything happened in less time than a breath could be drawn, as such things always *do* happen: The sudden power thrown upon the starboard oar whirled the boat around into the trough of the waves and the next sec-

ond its occupants were in the river. Luckily two of them were strong swimmers, and they had *need* to be, for a rowboat built to carry two, and none too well built at best, and a canoe which acted as though possessed of ten demons, are treacherous life preservers when five people are in the middle of a river in the height of a heavy thunder shower.

"Hold the canoe head to the wind and mind your wits!" shouted Hadyn, quickly flinging off his coat and shoes and plunging into the water to swim to Eleanor's rescue, for she had been thrown wide of the boat as it capsized. Eleanor herself was an unusually strong swimmer for a girl, but it is one thing to swim in a light bathing-suit and another to do so fully gowned. Miss Willing had made a desperate clutch for the boat and succeeded in securing a most precarious hold upon the keel. Fred Grand swam beside her, supporting her with one arm and keeping himself afloat with the other.

"Keep steady! Swim slowly!" cried Hadyn,

as he drew near Eleanor, who was rapidly being borne away from both boat and canoe by the wind. "Get the canoe over here, Forbes! Now hold her head to the wind while I get Eleanor aboard. Brace! Brace, man! Do you want our weight to pull you into the water too? There, never mind anything else, lie flat in the bottom and don't move," he commanded when Eleanor with his aid had managed to pull herself into the canoe, and drop like a soaked and sodden pile of clothing into the bottom, Hadyn steadying it as Forbes restored its equilibrium. "I'll soon be with you," he called to Grand and Miss Willing as he struck out for the boat, which luckily was drifting toward him. But here the battle for life was a fiercer one. Fred Grand's strength was nearly spent and Miss Willing was hysterical. Perhaps the battle would have been lost had not the launch at that instant arrived upon the scene, for when its owner realized the gravity of the situation he made all speed toward the luckless ones, and arrived just in time to lift the shrieking Miss

Willing aboard and rescue the men. Eleanor and Forbes were then taken into the launch and both girls rolled in oilskins, the only available wrappings, the men wringing themselves dry as best they might.

From the moment he set forth with Hadyn, Professor Forbes had been as one stricken dumb: Not a word had he spoken, but like an automaton obeyed each sharply issued order as it sprang from Hadyn's lips like shots from a Gatling gun. Now a more contrite, crushed mortal it would be hard to find as he bent above Eleanor, arranging her coverings, placing a cushion beneath her head and gently pushing back her soaked hair from her face.

Meanwhile Hadyn had his hands full with Fred Grand and Miss Willing, for the former had promptly fainted and the latter was sobbing in the wildest manner, clinging to him, and begging him not to leave her, while the captain sent his craft heading toward River-edge at a rate which threatened to wrench the engine from its bed. By the time it neared the

dock, Eleanor had sufficiently recovered to sit up, for her first thought was for her mother. Homer Forbes still hovered over her and watched every change in her expressive face. The thoughts passing through his mind just then might not have advanced the cause of scientific research, but the Recording Angel would probably have smiled while setting them down.

The past twenty minutes had been as hours of agony for those watching upon the dock. Neither Mrs. Carruth nor Constance spoke one word, but, clasped in each other's arms, stood straining every faculty to discover what was taking place far out on the water. The veil of rain was kinder than fractious nature intended, for they were unable to see the climax, and not until the launch ran up to the float did either realize what had really taken place. Hadyn's voice was the first to reassure them as he shouted:

"Don't be frightened! We're all safe and sound, only somewhat moist. It's all right,

Mrs. Carruth, Eleanor is bracing up in great shape. Look after her, Forbes, while I help Miss Willing."

Forbes needed no urging, but, placing his arm about the exhausted, soaked girl, half carried her ashore, saying softly: "I can't ask you to forgive me now. I can't expect you to until I've earned it, but I'm going to *do it*. Come this way, Mrs. Carruth and Miss Constance. Get a carriage, somebody, quick."

A dozen willing hands helped the girls, a dozen wraps were offered and a few moments later the cab was at hand and Eleanor being placed in it, Constance beside her to aid and console. But Mrs. Carruth, even when nearly overcome with anxiety for this eldest daughter, could not go counter to her instincts. Hurrying back to Miss Willing, who was practically in a state of nervous collapse, she said to Hadyn:

"Put her in the carriage with Eleanor and me. Our home is nearer and she needs instant

care. See that Fred Grand is sent home with friends, will you, dear?"

The last word was spoken unconsciously, but the light which sprung into Hadyn's eyes attested to his response.

"I'll see. I'll get him all fixed up and see that he's safe and then I'll come back to you—little mother."

"No, no, you must not. You are drenched and must go to your own home for dry garments," protested Mrs. Carruth.

"Haven't any: *Home* I mean, and I'm right as a trivet. What's a swim on a hot July day, anyhow? See, the sun is coming out and I'll be dry as a bone before long."

"Hadyn, *please* do as I wish. I can't have any further risks incurred and now I must go. *Please* heed me."

"I will. I'll get shipshape and then I'll come —*home*. You know you said I might borrow it. Good-bye. I'm off," and he turned to see that Fred Grand was in good hands before accepting a friend's offer of dry clothing and a

few of the creature comforts of which he so sorely stood in need. The rest of the party either hurried away toward their own homes, or followed the carriage which was speeding up the hill with the two dripping girls.

CHAPTER XVIII.

When the Soil is Ripe for the Sowing.

Fred Grand was soon at his home, a decidedly crestfallen mortal in every sense of the word, for he had been pretty keenly alive to the look in Constance Carruth's eyes as they rested upon him in his sylvan retreat, and the look had not been one to increase his self-esteem. Nor would he have voluntarily chosen to meet Hadyn Stuyvesant under these conditions. Hadyn, it is true, was his senior by five years, but they were both men with men's outlooks and gage of life, although each knew the other's to be governed by very different standards.

Hadyn's love for his mother, his patience with and sympathy for her sorrow, and the resultant invalidism, had matured him. His close intercourse with her, his care and tenderness had given him an understanding of wom-

anhood which very few men of his years shared in common with him. As the result of this knowledge and tenderness his attitude toward other women was filled with a deference and reverence which placed them above the plane upon which he lived and invested them with a purity and dignity to be venerated. He was no Miss Nancy, however. He knew the world; knew that it held many types of the opposite sex, some with which it could have dispensed to its advantage, but they did not figure in his particular portion of it. They aroused either utter indifference or pity, according to their characters. Miss Willing's type, for example, silly, frivolous, shallow, yet, thus far in her career, only indiscreet, and vainly trying to climb by any means she could grasp to a higher social plane, hardly found a place in his thoughts. True, he saw her daily, often had occasion to go to her 'phone booth, but to his credit be it said he was too entirely wanting in self conceit to be aware that her flutterings and preenings, like those of a popinjay, began

whenever he appeared upon the scene, or that they were any more marked for him than they would have been for any other man. She was simply a tiresome specimen of her sex from whom it was more agreeable to keep away than be thrown with.

But poor silly little *Pearl* (christened Mary Jane) Willing, had a poor foundation upon which to build her life's structure. Her home was anything but attractive, her mother a sadly overworked dressmaker, striving to support several children younger than this eldest daughter, to say nothing of a husband whose character for moral rectitude was certainly not open to close inspection, his ideal of manliness being to stand upon some corner in front of a saloon where he could smoke a cigar half the size of a wagon spoke and "blow," as his loafing friends termed it.

Unhappily, she was but one among many and not altogether to blame. Heredity is accountable for a vast deal in this world, filled as it is with a fair outside and a seamy under-

side. Only the *perfect* seamstress can make *both* beautiful to look upon, and poor Mrs. Willing, ready enough to live up to her name so far as her circumscribed mind and over-full life gave her light so to do, was certainly *not* an expert seamstress either figuratively or literally. She was proud of this eldest daughter. Proud of her beauty, her figure, her dash and self-assertion—the latter her father's endowment—but with about as much idea of the qualities which stand for true womanliness, its highest ideals, and all that go to establish its standard for true manhood, which in very truth it molds, as a cat has of guiding its kittens through the intricacies of conic sections. Poor soul, she had about all she could do to keep them decently clothed, fed, and in the grammar school—the limit of her aspirations in the line of education.

But fate had so ordered that one little clipper ship, running without a well-adjusted compass, was to find an able pilot and thus escape adding

to the number of derelicts upon life's broad ocean.

Within twenty minutes from leaving the dock Mrs. Carruth was in command of affairs within her home, and Mammy, dry as to garment, and with equilibrium fully restored, was her Lieutenant-Commander.

"Gimme dat chile whiles yo' gets Miss Nornie in her baid. Charles, yo' hustle down an' fill dese hyer hot water bags—dars quartses and quartses ob hot water in de biler on de range. I done sot it on afore we start, fo' I knows dars gwine be mighty good use fo' some when we all gits back wid dat mess o' dirty dishes, dough Gawd knows I ain't studyin' 'bout usin' it fer ter warm up half-drownded folks."

Mrs. Carruth was not long in getting Eleanor abed in spite of her protests that it was all foolishness, and she was as good as ever. But Mrs. Carruth had heard of reaction and meant to guard against it in the present instance so far as in her power lay.

As to Mammy her orders were peremptory, and more thoroughly done up than anyone realized from mental and physical shock, Miss Willing yielded completely to her dictates. To be undressed, rubbed with towels and alcohol until she was in a delightful glow, tucked away in a bed with hot water bags, and given a brimming glass of hot lemonade were attentions and luxuries far beyond her ken, the ministrations being accompanied by ceaseless comments, advice or admonitions.

"Dar now, honey, I'se done rub, an' vise, an' dose yo' 'nough fer ter kill or cure, an' only de Lawd gwine let us know which way it tu'n out, an' *He* ain' tellin' nothin' *ahaid* ob time, dough I spec's he's puttin' sense in we-all's haids what ter *do* fer ter mak' it come out de *right* way. Now yo' shut yo' gre't black eyes an' quit a-starin' at t'ings roun' dis hyer room an' go bye-low jes lak ma own babies do when I tells 'em. *Dey* min's dey Mammy an' yo's gotter do de same fer de time in han', kase I'se lent to yo' fo' de occasiom."

"O, but I ought n't to be *here,* I oughtn't. I ought to a-gone right home. I can't stay at Mrs. Carruth's. I can't. My mother don't know where I am," wailed the excited girl.

"How yo' know she don'?" demanded Mammy. "Yo' don' *know* ma Miss Jinny. Is yo' 'spose she ain' know jis 'xactly how yo' ma feel ef she hear 'bout de doin's out yander? Huh! Yo' better b'lieve she done sont wo'd to yo' ma long time sense, an' Charles done taken it. Charles, *he* ain' no fool, let me tell yo'. *He* ain' gwine scar' yo' ma daid. He jist natchelly gwine tell her dat yo' all done got wet—Gawd knows *dat's* de truf—yo' couldn't a-been no *wetter*—and dat we done brung de wet folks hyer kase it was handy an' yo'll be 'long home bimeby. Dat's 'splainin' 'nough, ain't it?"

"But I am dry *now* and please let me get up an' dress and go home. Miss Carruth doesn't like me, I know she doesn't, and she must feel awful to have me here making so much trouble for her family."

"Don' *lak* yo'!" exclaimed Mammy in sur-

prise. "Wha' mak' yo' t'ink dat? Why chile, she ain' *know* yo', so how dar gwine be any lakin' 'bout it?"

Mammy was entirely unconscious of the sarcasm of her remark, nor was the girl aware of its true significance.

"Oh yes, she does know me. Her candy booth is right next my 'phone in the Arcade. She knows me perfectly well."

"Um! Yas! I knows *dat,* ob co'se. Yas'm. But—but—yo' see—well—yo' ain' *been here a-visitin',"* ended Mammy, somewhat lamely, as she got into deeper social waters than she found navigable.

"A-visiting!" half sobbed the excited girl. "Why, Miss Carruth wouldn't be seen on the street with me, and after what happened this afternoon I don't believe she'll ever *speak* to me, though she's always been real nice and polite."

Mammy looked keenly at the excited girl, who had clasped her hands over her face and buried her head into her pillow. The sharp

old eyes rarely missed anything, and she was far wiser regarding some things than many would have given her credit for. She had not been going to the Arcade almost daily for several months without adding a few bits of knowledge to her already extensive worldly wisdom. She and Charles were pretty shrewd readers of human nature and she had seen enough of this girl and her type to understand it pretty thoroughly. Seating herself beside the bed, she patted the prettily rounded arm and said, soothingly:

"Now see hyer, honey, dis yere sort o' gwin's on ain' never he'p t'ings a mite. Yo's all frazzled out as 'tis an' if yo' tek ter actin' up dis-away yo' gwine mek yo'sef sick-a-bed des sartin suah, den we *will* be in a fix. Wha' done happen ter day dat gwine mak ma Miss Connie tu'n yo' down altogether lak yo' say? *She* ain' de kynd dat does dem t'ings. Ain' yo' done seed 'nough ob her fer ter pintedly unnerstan' *dat?* Ain' yo' know dat dere's white folks *an'* white folks? An' some of 'em cyant do what

odders kin kase tain't jist natchelly born *in* 'em to. Dat chile been raised de *right* way, so cou'se she's gotter *do* de right way. Her grandaddy was a Blairsdale."

Poor Mammy, she seemed to think the name a power wherewith to conjure, for could a Blairsdale be guilty of a social solecism?

"But she won't understand. She doesn't know the difference. Her ways and us girls' ways ain't the same though we're all right. She'll tell her mother too, and then *she* won't speak to me, and she's always been real polite to me when she's come to the booth, and it made me feel real proud to have her say 'Good afternoon, Miss Willing,' and all those men 'round to hear. It made 'em think we were friends and then they treated me sort of different for a little while after, though it didn't last very long. O please, please let me get up an' go home."

"Look a-hyer, chile," said Mammy with emphasis. "I ain' know wha' yo's a-talkin' 'bout, an' I ain' keer. I know's a *few* t'ings which

mebbe yo' ain' know I knows, but I'm sartin suah dey ain' got nottin' ter do wid what yo's harpin' on *now.* But dishyer I *does* know: *I* ain' de one ter rastle wid yo' *now.* I ain' de right so't. I kin tek keer of sick folks when it's dey bodies dat's a-pesterin' on 'em, but when dey's got sumpin' on dey min's, *dat's* de time dat it takes *white brains* fer ter deal wid 'em, and dat's what *I* ain' got. Yo'll talk twell de crack o' doom lessen *some*body stop yo', or yo' git talked out, and bress Gawd, *I* don' know wedder it's safer fer ter let yo', or ter mak yo' shet up, *an' I ain' gwine 'sume de* 'spons'bility: I'se gwine send Miss Jinny hyer fer ter 'cide de question. *Yas I is!* An' now don' yo' git yo'-self inter no panic nedder. *She* ain't no drag-on wha' gwine fer ter 'vour yo' wid fire and brimstun. I knows when I'se done come ter de eend ob my rope an' I ain' gwinter go tarin' long, hike-fer-Jo! twell I goes heels ober haid lak Pat Murphy's goat do. I gwine *hol' up in time.*" And with this indisputable assertion Mammy rose from her chair by the bed and left

the room. Miss Willing buried her head in the bedclothes and shivered as with a nervous chill.

A few moments later a soft footfall came along the hall and turned in at the door, as a gentle voice said:

"Why, my dear little girl, I had no idea the shock had so seriously unnerved you or I would have come at once. I was very selfish to give all my attention to my own girlie and nearly forget another who is evidently much more in need of my care. Had not Mammy told me I was needed here I fear I should have been very dilatory in looking to the needs of my guest. Poor, poor little girl, you are completely done up."

As she spoke Mrs. Carruth gently drew down the bed-coverings, smoothed them with a touch that arranged them as by magic, drew one of the girl's hands from her flushed face and held it in her own cool one. Then leaning slightly forward from the chair which Mammy had so lately occupied, she stroked back the

dark hair from the flushed forehead, looked into the brilliant eyes with her own, which seemed to soothe and calm with a glance, and asked:

"Will you be my good child for a little while, and try to grow calmer? Mammy is preparing a cooling, soothing drink for you, for she told me you were excited and feverish. I do not wonder, but we must remedy it and have you all well by to-morrow morning. Your mother knows you are here and I have told her not to worry. So, really, there is nothing to distress you so, is there?"

How tender the voice, glance and touch! The big burning eyes looked into the deep, serene ones for just one second and then crushing her face down into the pillow upon the hand she still held, the girl sobbed as though her heart would break.

CHAPTER XIX.

The Sowing.

Mrs. Carruth was too wise to seek to stop the outbreak. Nature must have an outlet at certain crises as she well knew, and the girl beside her had passed through a most terrifying one, although Mrs. Carruth did not suspect that part of it was mental reaction.

Reserved and strong herself, although not giving that impression to the superficial observer of character, she moved serenely and quietly through life, ruling and guiding more by example and innate force than by any special activities or spoken words. Her daughters were her companions, her friends, who went to her as naturally with the various questions and problems which came into their lives as they would have gone to each other, sure of her co-operation, sympathy, advice. True, not many problems arose, for the home machinery ran

smoothly, as a rule, and the oiling of the domestic wheels was not a public exhibition. No wild hurry-scurrying marked the operation; no squeaking, groaning bearings ever testified to the outer world that the oiling had been neglected until the machinery protested and resented the misuse.

She was aware, however, that there were plenty of homes in which the *oil*ing was *not* done in season, and alive to the natural results thereof. From her visits at the Arcade she suspected that the girl beside her was the victim of such a lack of foresight, and her heart went out to her as it went out to all young people of either sex. No one would have called Mrs. Carruth a brilliant woman; many might have considered her an unduly reserved one; some, possibly, a haughty one owing to a natural aloofness. But deep down beneath it all was a maternal instinct which would have endured the torments of Hades without a murmur for the sake of her children, which held for young people a tolerance and

tenderness past words to describe and had given a love and devotion to her husband which he alone had realized and valued. To her his loss was irreparable. Her heartache was incessant, but the world did not realize it. There was only one who did—old black, faithful Mammy. Her children must not suffer as *she* was suffering. *They* were young, with life all before them and God's graciously-given power to the young to *sometimes* forget. So she smiled and entered into their young lives with all the enthusiasm which the memory of her own youth gave her. Blessed provision of Providence when older men and women can recall how life looked to *them* when their years were bounded by the figures 2 and 0.

Presently the girl whose forehead she stroked so hypnotically began to grow calmer. The sobs ceased, Mrs. Carruth took from her belt a daintily-ironed pocket-handkerchief, gently wiped away the tears which hung upon the long, heavy lashes, rose, and going to the dresser, wet the handkerchief with some deli-

cate violet water from a pretty cut-glass flask and returning bathed the hot forehead and cheeks, saying with a sweet smile as she did so:

"There must be no more tempests *this* afternoon, little girl. There, that makes you cooler and more comfortable, I know. Now will you drink this? It's just a little homeopathic remedy for nerves that have been taxed too severely and is warranted to make them calm down and behave themselves. Drink it, dear," and placing one arm under Miss Willing's shoulder she partially raised her and held to her lips the glass which Mammy had stolen in and set upon a table.

The girl's hand trembled as she strove to hold the glass steady by laying her hand over Mrs. Carruth's, and she drank the draught hurriedly. Then, turning her eyes to the woman who had so gently laid her back upon her pillow and smoothed down the wrinkled case, she looked at her long and earnestly. The face which the intense eyes were regarding was as calm, serene and restful as some

great depth of woodland and as full of peace and power; the power of growth and development; of the serenity of sunlight, the struggle with storm; the resultant victory making all mysteriously beautiful; imparting a sense of ripe perfection.

Mrs. Carruth did not speak. She just held one of the cold, trembling hands and strove to let her own steady, cool ones convey by some mystic, inexplicable power the calmness and poise she wished to see restored.

Presently a faint smile curved the soft red lips, and the eyes grew less like those of a terrified animal's.

"Will you try to journey to the Land o' Nod, now?" asked Mrs. Carruth with an answering smile. "It is the most enticing spot imaginable and exactly the one for you at present."

"How *can* you be so good to me? How *can* you?" was the vehement reply.

"And why should I *not* be 'good,' as you put it, little girl? Surely, you were sorely in need of care, and your own home was several miles

away they said. We are glad to do any little service possible. So don't let it worry you in the least, but take the journey I advise."

"But if you *knew* all you couldn't be good to me—you just couldn't. When Miss Constance tells you you'll wish you hadn't. Oh, I oughtn't to have come here at *all*. She will tell the others and it will go all over South River-edge and my mother will scold awful when she hears about it."

Sure now that some mental disturbance was causing more excitement than the physical shock, Mrs. Carruth was somewhat puzzled as to whether she would do harm or good by leading the girl on to unburden her mind. But something in the appealing look of the eyes went straight to her motherly heart, and slipping from the chair to her knees beside the bed she drew the dark head into her circling arm, as she had many a time drawn her own little ones when some childish grief overwhelmed them, rested her cheek against the

glossy black hair and said in a voice which it would have been hard to resist:

"Will you borrow me for a mother for just half an hour, dear? Let me fill the place of the one I do not know since she is not here to fill it? Can you tell me what is troubling you and let the older woman help the younger one untangle a snarl if there really *is* one? Sometimes, you know, they seem *very* knotty ones to eighteen years, but only simple ones to forty-odd. You haven't lived so very many, you know, so they cannot have snarled *very* tightly."

"But they seem to get tighter and tighter all the time and I don't know *how* to get them out. I don't *dare* go to mother. She'd half kill me, and besides she hasn't time to bother with my troubles; she's got enough of her own with all those young ones to take care of and support."

Mrs Carruth wondered swiftly if there ever *could* come a moment in *any* mother's life when she was too overwhelmed by her own worries to have time to heed those of her children; to

put self out of the question and comfort and advise even though her own heart were torn asunder. But her words were:

"Have you tried to learn whether she had 'time,' dear?"

"Maybe I haven't tried the right way, but sometimes when I've wanted to ask her something she's said she hadn't any time to talk over my calf-love affairs; that I'd better keep my mind on my telephone booth and earn my living; that *she'd* got enough to do to support the others, and that the sooner I earned enough to help do that the better for everybody. But I like to have a good time and can't help it if the men come to the booth and talk to me, can I? Some of 'em are real nice and polite and never do a thing or say a thing they wouldn't say to a real, true lady like Miss Carruth. But some of the others are too fresh for any use and they think they can say anything to me just because I'm only a 'Hello girl.' O, *I* know them! Some of 'em are gentlemen, too, and old enough to be my father. Why, there's

Mr. ——" but before the name could be mentioned Mrs. Carruth's hand was laid gently upon Miss Willing's lips.

"Don't mention names, little girl. Some things are better not spoken, you know."

"Well, maybe you're right, but I guess if his wife and daughters knew some of the 'rot' he talks to me they wouldn't hold their heads so high when they go swishing and swinging through the Arcade to his office. And they *know* who I am, too, for mother sews for 'em and they've seen me a hundred times when I've carried the work home evenings. It wouldn't hurt 'em to just bow and say how-d'-do, would it? They think I haven't any feelings just because I sit at a 'phone board."

The dark eyes filled with quick tears of wounded pride.

"Little one, those are the very things you have got to grow strong enough to withstand and not permit to wound you. Remember this —it requires more than rustling silks, costly

furs and the latest modes to make a *true* gentlewoman or gentleman and——"

"But they are *rich*—awful rich!"

"Ah! *that* is America's weakness. We will learn better, I hope, as we grow *older*. *Some* have always realized the fact—more will in time. The god Riches shows up big and boldly and has many worshipers, and I do not doubt always will have. There are too many who have nothing else *to* worship. But sterling worth, birth and breeding will hold their places forever, and 'to do unto others as we would have them do unto us' is a pretty safe guide, after all, don't you think so?"

How gently the voice fell upon the girl's ears. How restful the speaker's presence. How soothing the atmosphere of the room. For a few moments she made no answer, then raising one arm she laid it about Mrs. Carruth's neck and nestling closer asked:

"May I tell you *all* about it? From the very beginning? You love your own girls so you'll understand."

"You may tell me anything you wish, dear. I shall never betray your confidence."

"Not even to Con—to Miss Carruth—I mean?" The words were eager but doubtful.

"What right have I to betray it to *any*one? Even my own daughter."

"But it's *about* her. I did something dreadful mean to her and to-day—to-day she saw—well, I was with Fred Grand up in the woods."

"Yes?"

"Didn't she tell you about the candy?"

"No. I haven't the least idea to what you are referring."

"Is that straight?" The old hard light sprung into the girl's eyes for a second, Mrs. Carruth flushed slightly and the girl saw it, crying contritely:

"Oh, I didn't mean *that*. Truly I didn't. I'm, I'm—oh, I don't know *how* to be a *real* lady like you even if I can rig up and look what the men call 'stunning.' I mean that *I* took candy from Miss Carruth's booth. I meant to pay for it—I really, truly did—and

I snubbed Fred Grand when *he* didn't bring me some every day and *he* took it, too. But you know his family's way down and he hasn't got a thing but his ten dollars a week—and—and, well, *that* don't go far to buy a pound of sixty-cent candy every day, and his lunch, and hand over five dollars every Saturday to his mother as he has to, and he's so stuck on me that he's afraid I'll turn him down for some other fellow if he don't put up the candy. He's crazy for me to marry him but—bosh! he's only nineteen and don't earn his salt, and he's just like putty in my hands. I could marry him to-morrow if I wanted to, but wouldn't I be a fool to marry *that* baby? He's just like one. And he's so crazy jealous of Mr. Stuyvesant he don't know what to do, though goodness knows he needn't get into such a state over *him.* Hadyn Stuyvesant hasn't got any use for *me,* though I *do* say he's always as polite and nice as can be and a real gentleman. He could have me to-morrow if he wanted me, which he *don't,* and I ain't never been able to

get him to stop at the booth one single minute after he's used the 'phone, though goodness knows I've *tried* hard enough. *He's* all right, Hadyn Stuyvesant is; everybody says that. Then to-day, when I heard you were all going off on that picnic, I worked it so Fred Grand would ask me to row over there with him. I thought maybe after your lunch was over we'd sort of stroll around where the picnic party was and as *he* was one of your set maybe you'd invite us to join you. But he *would* go up to the glen first and then he got busy with his fussing and—and—well, *that* was when Miss Carruth and Hadyn Stuyvesant pretty nearly tumbled over us and—well—I guess I don't ever want to see such looks on anyone's faces *again*. It had been just fun up to that time, but *then* I began to understand that some men and girls don't get to be—to be—well, don't get engaged *that* way. That those two lookin' at us for just one-half minute wouldn't a been sittin' like us until they *were* engaged, and maybe not even *then*. Somehow that their

ways wern't *our* ways. And then came the shower and as we were starting for the boat we found Miss Eleanor all alone in the woods near the Kettles and—well—you know all the rest—but oh, I *don't* want to see Miss Constance nor Mr. Stuyvesant nor that *fool* Fred Grand ever again, and I *will* pay back the money for the candy the very minute I can—I could have done it before but I wanted to buy that organdie for to-day and now it's a sight for fair, isn't it? And I'll make Fred Grand stop bringing me candy and pay up, too. I will, I will—honest—honest! Do you believe me?"

Did ever such a torrent of words rush upon any one's ears?

CHAPTER XX.

Adjusting the Compass.

That it required a good deal of self-control upon Mrs. Carruth's part to maintain her sympathetic attitude toward the girl whom her arm encircled, and whose hair she continued to stroke need not be dwelt upon. All the instincts of a gentlewoman were shocked; all her maternal tendencies and love taxed to the very limit. Theoretically she knew the world—knew its types—its darker side—its temptations, but in its experiences her soul was as pure, her heart as innocent as her own children's. Her girlhood had been spent in an atmosphere of culture, and of chivalry toward her sex which were as much a matter of course in the home of a well-born, carefully-reared Southern girl as the service of her negro servants.

She had become the wife of a man whose

reverence for womanhood governed every act of his life; to whom the names "wife" and "mother" were holy. Of the coarser, bolder, harsher side of life—even the side less delicately finished—she knew nothing. From it she had been held apart first by her parents, then by her husband and last by old Mammy. Her "finer clay" formed a different figure from many with which, in her changed conditions, she was forced to come in contact although in her unassuming simplicity she was not aware of this.

But Mammy fully realized it and sought to spare her the rubs which deface and roughen. Nevertheless, Mammy felt instinctively that only her Miss Jinny's delicate instincts could cope with the tossed-about little craft so near shipwreck as this girl who was the toy of the wind and wave of circumstances.

For a few moments after Miss Willing's torrent of words ceased Mrs. Carruth did not speak. She had to collect herself and become adjusted to an outlook so new, so unforeseen

that for a time she was dazed. Then, in one overwhelming flood came the true force of the situation. Here was a girl no older than her own daughter, the eldest of a large family, forced into the world to earn her livelihood and oh, so imperfectly equipped to do it, finding at home neither guidance nor even tolerance; only a hurry-scurry for bare existence and its accompanying discord. She herself a beauty, and made more than ever conscious of it by a foolish mother's remarks and the ready flattery of the worse than foolish men into whose presence her occupation daily forced her.

There are some situations which women understand instinctively even though they themselves have never experienced them. Perhaps they are enlightening visions sent by a higher power to make them understand and help those whose lives are less well-ordered. Mrs. Carruth's actions were only momentarily arrested. Then the woman rose to the occasion.

"Little one—poor little one," she said softly,

"How imperfectly you understand. Lie down upon your pillows and let me sit here beside you. We can talk more freely when we look into each other's eyes for they are the soul's windows, you know. So, now try to grow calmer and we will soon unsnarl this tangle. It really is not half so bad as you fancy. Yes, hold my hand, for I want you to feel the mother touch, for then there can be no doubt. Now will you listen to me and believe?"

"I'll believe *anything* you say," half sobbed the girl.

"That is comforting. Well, to begin with, Constance has never mentioned anything about her candy to me, nor to anyone else, I am sure. Furthermore, she is not at all likely to, and for these reasons: She knew when venturing upon her experiment that she might very naturally meet with some losses because the venture was a most unusual one in every way. Then, too, she would not tell me about it lest it disturb my peace of mind, for she, in common with Eleanor and Mammy, spare me

all they can. But over and above all that, I do not believe her suspicions have rested upon you, or indeed that she has *suspected* anyone for a single moment. She has undoubtedly concluded that it was an oversight upon someone's part which will be righted in due time. So much for *that* part of the problem. Now for the other, which, from *my* standpoint, is in much greater need of solving. You will soon return the small sum for which you are indebted and the matter can be forgotten forever——"

"But won't you *tell* her?" demanded the girl, sitting straight up to look at Mrs. Carruth.

For a second Mrs. Carruth did not reply. Then she asked:

"What do you think?" a gentle smile curving her lips as she asked it.

"No, you won't—you *won't!* I *know* you won't, not even to your own girl," cried Mary Willing, dropping back upon the pillow.

"Not even to my *own* girl," answered Mrs.

Carruth softly. "It would betray the confidence of another to do so."

"Oh, why *haven't* I known you always—always? I'd never a-been such a fool if I had. You make things seem all so different and yet you don't take my head off."

"Why should I wish to take it off? It is far too pretty and looks much better where it is."

"Do you *really* think it *is* pretty? My mother is always telling me I'm awful good lookin' and I'd better make the most of my han'som' face and all that, and the men say I'm 'a beaut' and 'stunning' and 'a peach' and oh, all that nonsense, but—well—of course, I've got my lookin' glass and *that* says I look pretty well, but—but—somehow I haven't got —what *is* it? I get all the latest styles in hats and clothes and things, but I never see Constance Carruth—I mean *Miss* Carruth—walk into that Arcade without I feel like thirty cents."

Poor Mrs. Carruth! Never in all her life had she been called upon to adjust a compass

so deviated as this one, and her sensations were very much what those of the owner of a little naphtha launch might be if suddenly put in command of a battleship. For a time the ticking of the pretty little clock upon the mantelshelf was the only sound to be heard. Mary Willing lay perfectly still holding Mrs. Carruth's hand in both her own, but never for a moment removing her burning black eyes from the older woman's face, looking, looking, looking as though upon her next words rested her own fate. Mrs. Carruth seemed almost unconscious of the look, and even of the girl's presence as she sat gazing out into the glowing world beyond her windows, a world made exquisitely beautiful from having passed through nature's wonderful renovating process of wind, rain and the glorious sunset. Dame Nature, like the gentle mother she really is, attests to the fact that her radical measures are resorted to only for the thorough rejuvenation of all she most values. But Mrs. Carruth was hardly aware of the beauty of the roseate river,

the deep greens of the opposite mountains, or the gorgeous coloring of the sky. All her thoughts were introspective and as yet hardly adjusted. The world in which she had always lived and moved had never heretofore presented just such a problem as this. Yet it was one with which she wished most earnestly to deal wisely and to remedy if possible. She was not a woman given to outward manifestations of religion, but deep within her soul bided a faith which made doubt impossible; the faith which makes the little child turn to God and ask for a new dolly; the faith which makes her say: "Please, God, don't let it rain on me." A simple faith which greater souls might do well to emulate. Presently she turned toward the girl and as she did so the doubtful, perplexed expression faded from her face to be replaced by its usual gentle, serene one. Miss Willing's was full of suspense; Mrs. Carruth was quick to feel it. Stooping forward she rested her lips upon the dark hair and whispered softly: "Dear Father, give me wisdom to

help one of your beautiful children. To teach her how to value the beauty with which you alone could endow her. To prove its greatest worth and value in order that future generations may be made better because of it. That she may be, indeed, one of your little women, to guide and help others to higher things."

"We are very helpless without His aid, dear, and I think He will give it. At any rate we have *asked* it. I do not wish you to talk longer now for you are too exhausted in every way —and you *must* rest. Talking will only exhaust you more and do no good. Nor do *I* wish to talk any longer—you might feel it a lecture and we don't like lectures in this home. We prefer the love which is so quick to think of the other, and by showing it help far more than endless words ever can. Poor, tossed about little craft, you are sorely in need of a compass, and perhaps I may have one tucked away up my sleeve which I can give you. Will you accept it?"

"I'd accept anything *you* offered," exclaimed the girl vehemently.

"Very well. I'll hunt it up and then we will see if it is properly adjusted. But the thing to do now is *rest*. I have a wonderful sedative which has never failed me and I am going to try its efficacy with *you*. It is a very pleasant one to my thinking. I'll bring it. And now 'sleep sweetly in this quiet room . . . . . and let no mournful yesterdays thy peaceful slumbers start.' I am fond of those little verses and find them a pleasant night-cap. To-morrow we will have a little talk together before you leave us and I think we will be better friends after all is talked over, and you will understand the world, *our* little world, I mean—it is a very sweet one to me and mine—better, and perhaps choose it for your 'quiet little pool.' I shall help you try to find it more satisfying than the rushing stream beyond. The rushing stream is very exciting and stimulating but one cannot thrive long upon stimulants and excitement, you know. Good-night,

dear. Mammy will bring your supper at once and then I'll send the sedative," concluded Mrs. Carruth, with a gentle caress as she rose from her chair. Impulsively Mary Willing clasped both arms about her and held her close, whispering intensely:

"Oh, I *want* to be like *her* and I know you will show me how. My goodness, if you could see the difference in the looks the men give *her* as she walks down the Arcade corridor to her booth—though she don't never seem to see 'em —and the looks *I* get, I guess you'd know *why* I want to be, though I'd have died yesterday before I'd have told any one so. But now things all sort of look different to me. I guess gettin' half drowned *does* make people think a lot. Good-night. I'll eat and drink whatever *you* send if its bitter as hemlock."

"Neither will be bitter. We try not to have bitter doses in this home," and disengaging herself from the clasping arms Mrs. Carruth went quietly from the room leaving the girl to a perfect maelstrom of thoughts. Fifteen

minutes later Mammy entered with a tray upon which a tempting little supper was daintily spread, and a cluster of pansies laid beside the plate. On a card was written:

A little bunch of heart'sease, I send this even-
tide,
May all that it betokens within your heart
abide.

Mammy served the meal with endless comment and command, her object being to keep her charge from talking. She succeeded. No one could get a word in edgewise when Mammy had the floor. When the meal was ended Mammy picked up the tray and with a final nod of high authority said:

"Now do lak Miss Jinny tells yo' and go straight off by-low."

"But she said I must take something else, and I haven't yet," demurred Miss Willing.

"Dat'll come 'long in jist a minit. It's out yander in the hall a-waitin' fer me ter git out ob de way. Good-night, Miss Willin'. Go

sleep lak a good chile," and with this advice Mammy departed.

The twilight fell softly. Out on the lawn the robins sang their bedtime songs. Some sleepy birds twittered a good-night from their nests in the Japanese ivy which grew so thickly upon the masonry of the house, just outside the windows. Miss Willing closed her eyes and listened to the soothing sounds, vaguely wondering when the sleeping potion was to be given, yet too content to care very much one way or the other. The contrast between the peace of her present surroundings and those to which she was ordinarily accustomed was so marked as to make her wonder whether she was in the same world. Presently from just beyond her partly closed door came the softest, most flute-like notes. Was it a bird? Surely no human throat could produce such sounds. Yet no bird could whistle "The Dreamland Tree" like this.

Softly, exquisitely, tenderly fell the notes, evidently without the least effort upon the

whistler's part, gliding from one beautiful air to another as though her repertoire included almost every one popularly known as either classical or ordinary.

With thoughts wandering off into a hazy, dreamy world of unreality, borne along by the flute-like air, Mary Willing drifted out of a world of reality—a world which for the past few hours had been filled with events sorely taxing to body and soul, and away and away into the beautiful land of refreshing slumber—a land from which she would return susceptible to the new influences destined to reshape her life and mold her future into one full of usefulness and beauty.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Heart of a Girl.

As soon as he could get into dry garments, Hadyn returned to Mrs. Carruth's home, apparently none the worse for his involuntary swim. Mrs. Carruth met him as he hurried up the steps to ask how the girls were getting on. She had just left Miss Willing and the traces of tears still rested upon her lashes.

"Little mother, what *is* it?" he asked quickly.

"All is well, dear laddie," answered Mrs. Carruth, laying her hand upon his shoulder a moment, "only she is greatly unnerved——"

"Constance?" he asked anxiously.

"No, Miss Willing. I have just come from her room. Poor little tossed-about soul, I pity her."

Hadyn's eyes were filled with a wonderfully soft light as he answered:

"'Her bounty is as boundless as the sea—

her love as deep' for us all, isn't it? How much you give without ever suspecting that you have given at all. I am sorry for Miss Willing—very. Is there anything I can do to help things along? Don't hesitate to call upon me if I can, and by the way, may I put Comet out in the stable? I want to remain here until about midnight in case I am needed."

"But, laddie, you must not! You have had such a tax upon your strength as it is," protested Mrs. Carruth.

"Bosh! O, I beg your pardon—I didn't mean to be rude—but what is a little ducking like that for me? It's a different matter for Miss Carruth and Miss Willing, and Constance's fright was enough to bowl her over completely. May I stay?"

"Stay! You can not realize what a comfort your presence will be to me. I am sometimes sorely in need of a man's prompt action and advice, and your thought for me is very comforting."

"Perhaps I'm not much of a 'man,' so far as

years and experience count, but all the man there is *in* me longs to serve *you,* you may be sure of that every time. There isn't a spot on earth that seems like home excepting this one, and you have made it doubly that to me by your welcome. It *was* home long ago, but I was such a kid then that I hardly remember it. It is *you* who have made it seem so in truth."

"Then use it as such. Put Comet in the stable for the night—yes—hear me to the end —for if I am to accept the name you have given me I mean to claim its prerogatives— and then we will tuck you away until morning. We are not crowded and guest rooms are still available. Will you obey 'the little mother?' "

"Can I do otherwise when inclination so gallops with her commands?" asked Hadyn, taking both Mrs. Carruth's hands in his and looking into her eyes with such a light of affection and devotion in his own straightforward glance that all her motherly heart went out to this man, who at manhood's morning was left so entirely alone in the world.

"Thank you, dear," she said as she released her hands, and placing one on either side of his face drew his head down and rested her lips for a moment upon his forehead. "Thank you for all you have done for me to-day, and good-night. I must go back to the girls now, and I may not see you again. Mammy will show you to your room."

Hadyn's eyes filled as he said quickly: "It is many a long day since such a good-night has been bidden me, and no one guesses how I've missed it. May I return it as I used to? We were very close to each other, she and I."

"If I can in even the smallest degree fill her place, dear, try to realize how gladly I will do so."

"Then good-night," and his lips were pressed gently to Mrs. Carruth's. "Remember, I am your foster-son now and shall never forget the place you have given me in your heart. Good-night, dear little mother," and turning quickly he hurried from the library.

When he returned from making Comet com-

fortable in Baltie's stable he found Mammy awaiting him. It was nearly ten o'clock and above stairs all was quiet, and the lights in the rooms occupied by the two girls turned low. Mrs. Carruth was lying upon the couch in her room, Mammy having insisted upon removing her gown and making her comfortable in a kimono before she went down stairs to complete her duties for the night. Jean had long since gone to dreamland. As to Professor Rockwell, the prime cause of all the misfortune which had overtaken the party, not a word had yet been heard from him, although several of the men had at once returned to the opposite shore to search for him when his absence was discovered. But if the truth must be told too much concern filled the hearts of all for those in Mrs. Carruth's home to leave much room for thoughts of the science-mad Rockwell. Perhaps a thorough drenching would restore his wits which had seemed so hopelessly a-wool-gathering.

"Is yo' ready fo' to go to yo' room now,

Massa Stuyv'sant? Kase I'se done got it all reddy fo' yo', an' yo' must be cl'ar tuckered out wid all *dis* day's doin's. Bress Gawd! dey's ended widout a-brekin' we-all's hearts. Come 'long wid me, sah."

"Is Miss Carruth quite over the shock, Mammy, and the little mother less anxious?" asked Hadyn as he followed Mammy upstairs.

Mammy shot a quick glance from her sharp eyes as she answered:

"De little mother? Yis, dat's de suah livin' right name fo' her. Yo'se done hit it. She's *all* mother, an' ain' fitten ter be nothin' else. *Her* place is right hyer in de home wid her chillern, an' if *I* kin holp it she ain' never a-gwine to go out ob it. She's de *haid,* she is, an' de *mistis.* I ain' got no use fer dese hyer twenty-centuries women wha' every-body's talkin' 'bout now-a-days, an' wha's spilin' fer ter hike ter de polls an' vote. Gawd-a-mighty! Wha' ma ol' Massa Blairsdale say ef Miss Jinny ever is ter go a-consortin' wid de trash I'se done seed hangin' roun' some o' *dose*

places. He git right straight outen his grave an' come and bang me slap side de haid fer not lookin' atter her like I oughter. Yas, sah, dis hyer yo' room. Sorry, sah, I done hatter hike yo' up two flights o' stairs, I is, but Miss Willin' in de secon' flo' gues' room, an', an', well, *dis hyer one* de plesantes' one in de mawnin' when de sun come a streamin' in wid a 'howdy-dis-mawnin', sah.' An' so I don' fix it all up fo' yo' an', an', well, sah, yo' mustn't min' wha' a ole 'oman say to yo', will yo' now? but, yo' see I knows pintedly yo' ain' a-comin' hyer wid no idee ob bein' our gues' ober night an' so ob *cou'se,* ob *cou'se* yo' ain' brung yo' *nightie* long wid yo', so—so, well I done do de bes' I kin fo' yo'—I done brung out one ob Massa Bernard's 'jamma-suits and dar 'tis. It's been laid way dese many days an' it *do* sort o' smell ob de camphire-wood chest, but 'pend 'pon it it's sweet as de washboa'd made it when I las' done play ma chune on it. It, it—well, mebbe it's *full size,* kase massa Bernard he

bigger man dan *yo'* is, but yo' ain' gwine min' nuffin' so triflin' 's *dat, is* yo'?"

Hadyn waited patiently for the talking machine to run down before he attempted to interrupt. When at length it did, he said:

"Why Mammy, how thoughtful you are for a lonesome fellow. It seems like old times to have some one turn down my bed and have my night togs handy. And, Mammy, do you know this very room used to be mine when I lived here with father and mother years ago? I tell you it makes old memories come back when I look around it, and the mother who never missed coming in to say good-night to me doesn't seem so *very* far away. But the room wasn't rigged up with so many dainty furbelows then. It takes a girl's hand, I fancy, to give these touches, and by George, they do make it homey, don't they?"

Hadyn's eyes went from one object to another, as a sort of subconscious wonder filled his mind concerning the innumerable feminine accessories of the room. The dresser with its

dainty celluloid appointments; school banners and pennants upon the walls; endless photographs on the mantel shelf. Books such as girls enjoy filled the bookcase. Half a dozen silken bags of as many shapes and sizes were hanging wherever they could be hung. A tennis racket, a pair of driving gloves, a riding crop. All this was not taken in at one glance, for Mammy during his inspection had said in reply to his words:

"Yo' don' tell me so, sah! Well, well. I don' hit it right when I say to put yo' up here, isn't I? Yo'll sleep lak a baby. Is dey anyt'ing mo' I kin do fo' yo' comfit? No? Well, den, good-night, sah, good-night."

"Good-night, good old Mammy, good-night," was the hearty reply.

But it was two full hours before Hadyn Stuyvesant put to the test the fit of Mr. Carruth's night garments. Slipping off his shoes lest he disturb his hostess, he prowled about the room, looking first at one object, then at another, each confirming the suspicion he had

been harboring from the moment he entered it, a suspicion which was now the conviction that he was to occupy Constance's bedroom. His first impulse was to seek out Mammy and state in very positive terms that he would not remain and thus deprive Constance of the comforts of which she so sorely stood in need after such a tax upon her nerves as the experiences of the afternoon had been. Then came the thought that by so doing he would only wound the friends who had made him so welcome in their home. They, with Mammy as master hand, had undoubtedly ordered all for the mutual comfort of those beneath that roof and by meddling he would only do harm. So seating himself in a low chair beside a table upon which stood a softly-shaded lamp and a work-basket filled with bits of essentially feminine work, and also lay several books and magazines, he clasped his hands behind his head and let his eyes travel from one object to another as he abandoned himself to a strangely-contented reverie. The present hour was enough.

Why mar it? As old memories crowded in he recalled the room as it had been when he was a wee laddie of eight. The gentle, gracious mother with her incessant thought and care for his welfare and her husband's. How vivid were memory's pictures; how penetrating the sound of voices that were stilled forever. And the present? It was here before him—"the heart of a girl" unconsciously revealed by every object in the room. Not only her heart, but her mind and soul as well. Lying upon the table beside him was an open book, the pages scored, and marginal notes testifying to the reader's impressions. Taking it up he read, "Ease is the lovely result of forgotten toil," and in the margin the following note: "Do I *wish* to forget the toil? If the ease follows, as I mean it *shall,* for I'm only beginning now, do I wish to forget how it was won? Will it not be sweeter to recall the struggles which led to the 'ease?' The busy, busy days, the long hours of work and study, with mother's dear smile to encourage and help; her gentle voice

which so often praised, but so rarely, rarely blamed. Her love for us girls, her love for everyone, for I can't recall a harsh word or lack of tenderness for us or for others. Dear, dear little mother, the past years have held sorrows and struggles for you, but your girlie is going to make those which follow hold joy and peace, God willing."

At that point Hadyn suddenly closed the book, his face flushing as he murmured softly: "Man—the place whereon thou standest is holy ground!" and laying the book back upon the table he rested his arms upon it and laid his head down upon them. Twenty minutes later he rose and prepared for bed; the snowy, beautifully-laundered sheets so neatly ironed by Mammy's magic hands almost speaking aloud their invitation to sleep tranquilly between them as they gave forth a faint fragrance of the sachet pads which covered each shelf of the linen closet; for Mammy's early training by her Miss Jinny's mother had been of no ordinary order, and when her linen was laid

away each week the last pieces to be carried upstairs must be laid *beneath* all the others "fer ter ketch de sweetness ob de sachet bags, ob cou'se." Sleep did not come easily to Hadyn's eyes that night as he lay upon that bed, but many visions filled the pretty room—visions worthy of its peace and purity.

CHAPTER XXII.

In the Cause of Science.

The following morning, thanks to Mammy's ceaseless care and Mrs. Carruth's watchfulness throughout the night, the victims of the accident were nearly as well as ever. Eleanor, although still a little weak and nervous, was able to come downstairs, and Miss Willing, while physically strong, was strangely quiet. The girl had learned a good deal in twenty-four hours, and would not soon forget it, either. Soon after breakfast, at which both girls insisted upon being present, Miss Willing announced her determination of returning home.

"Then you must let me drive you there," said Hadyn. "I must get back to my office, you know, and I will drive you to your home with pleasure. But I'd advise you not to try going to the Arcade to-day. You are not in fit

shape," he added kindly as he looked at the girl.

She was quick to note the difference in both look and tone, and to realize that the Mary Willing seated at Mrs. Carruth's breakfast table, deporting herself with modesty and dignity, and the Mary Willing seated at her 'phone booth in the Arcade, casting challenging glances at every man who visited it, were two different persons in Hadyn Stuyvesant's eyes, and the lesson was taken to heart.

"Oh, I *must* go there! There is no one to fill my place, you know, Mr. Stuyvesant," she replied quickly.

"Will you leave that to me? I'll see Mr. Porter and arrange it all. And she really *ought* not go there to-day, ought she, Mrs. Carruth?" he concluded.

"She certainly ought not, and I strongly advise against it," replied Mrs. Carruth. "Please be guided by our advice, Miss Willing."

How gently persuasive the look and tone!

"I don't know——" said the girl doubtfully.

"*We do.* Yes, Hadyn, please take her home. I shall feel easier, and if I only knew what had become of our science-mad friend, my mind would be quite at rest. I wish we could hear from Professor Forbes."

As though in answer to her wish the telephone bell jingled its summons at that moment, and saying hastily: "Excuse me, please; I'll answer it," Hadyn hurried out into the hall.

The funny one-sided conversation which ensued kept all on the alert until the receiver was hung up and Hadyn came back into the dining-room with a broad smile on his face.

"They've caught the madman."

"Where?" demanded Constance, her eyes dancing.

"Up in the mountains, where madmen are at home," laughed Hadyn.

"Pray tell us what *did* happen to him," begged Eleanor.

"Forbes had just had a telephone from him. He's been up at Barmour's."

"Barmour's!" cried each voice in chorus.

"*Barmour's!*" repeated Hadyn.

"How under the sun did he get there?" exclaimed Mrs. Carruth.

"He didn't do it under the sun—he did it under the rain—bucketfuls of it, as near as I can learn," cried Hadyn. "Went mooning off—as Eleanor knows to her sorrow—got lost, and kept on mooning until he ran into the Barmour's cabin. He 'phones Forbes that he 'wandered away and away with Nature' until he quite lost track of everything, and reached the cabin in the mountain quite drenched. They took him *in,* dried him *out,* put him *up,* and this morning drove him *down* to Sheffield from which point he has 'phoned."

"Why Sheffield is at least twenty miles from here," was Mrs. Carruth's astonished remark.

"Oh, *that's* nothing. A mere minor detail all in the cause of science," laughed Hadyn. " 'Nature' led him a wild-goose chase *this* time all right. I wonder how she'll lead him home again? Railway service isn't exactly rapid transit out that way. I trust he's had no more

sympathetic ailments, for I fancy he's had some very real ones to down. He can't possibly get back to Riveredge before this afternoon."

"Perhaps he won't come at all. If *I'd* been such a ninny I wouldn't want to put my nose inside Riveredge as long as ever I lived," burst out Jean, who had been an attentive listener to the conversation.

"Neither would I, little sister!" cried Hadyn, laying his arm caressingly over her shoulder, for she had insisted upon sitting next him.

"Why that's worse than riding the heifer like I did," was her self-satisfied assertion.

"Guess yo's right, Honey," assented Mammy. "All yo' done was ter give me an' de heifer a bath an' dat ain' hurt neider ob us a mite," she ended with a chuckle.

And thus was Professor Rockwell's exit from the scene accepted by his friends, for he never reappeared. A letter arrived a little later to state that he felt it necessary to hasten back to his college town in order to make notes

of his observations while they were still fresh in his mind.

Soon after Miss Willing's departure with Hadyn, Professor Forbes appeared upon the scene to inquire for Eleanor, his inquiry lasting hours and driving Mammy nearly frantic, for he bobbed up at every turn and, as she expressed it, was "unner foot de hull endurin' day."

Nevertheless, his coming led to a new field of action, for he remained not only for luncheon, but dinner as well, in order to discuss with Eleanor a scientific work upon which he was engaged and to which his observations while at the Kettles had given an added impetus. Incidentally, he also strove manfully to reinstate himself in the good graces of Mrs. Carruth, and a still more potent factor to his future status in the household, Mammy, for the former, even though too gentle to harbor resentment toward any living being, certainly had *some* cause for a mild form toward this

man who had begun the day as host and ended it pretty close to a lunatic.

When luncheon ended he and Eleanor went out to sit upon the piazza where the all-important subject could be discussed without interruption.

"The trouble is, I can't find anyone who will copy for me as I wish. There are plenty of copyists and stenographers over in South Riveredge, but that's 'four miles from the lemon,' you see," said he with a perplexed wag of his head.

"Is there much copying to be done?" asked Eleanor from her nest of pillows in the hammock where he had settled her with much concern for her comfort.

"Yes, a good deal. What I've already written and have still to write will take a month or more to copy. It really *ought* to be done under my personal supervision, for half the copyists are idiots and the other half don't care."

Eleanor began to laugh and the Professor

looked at her through his thick-lensed glasses as though he doubted her sanity.

"I beg your pardon, but I can't help it. If you only knew what a home thrust you've given. You see, I've been trying to get some copying to do—I used often to copy letters for father, and really became quite an adept at it —but your sweeping condemnation of all copyists rather takes the wind out of my sails, doesn't it?"

"No, really! Were you? Did you seriously think of copying? Oh, why—well——" stammered the embarrassed man.

"Yes, really. The only difficulty is to get the copying. You see, I can't very well walk into a lawyer's or somebody else's office and say: 'Here am I, an expert copyist (which I'm not) sorely in need of a job to boost me along the flowery path of learning next winter, so be charitable and give me some to do.' Nor does mother like me to advertise. She has some very deeply-rooted aversions to certain ven-

tures. So there I am," and Eleanor waved her hands resignedly.

"But—but—but really, Miss Carruth, if you could, if you would, if you had a typewriter, if you had the time, why there is no reason in the world—why it would be a most satisfactory, a most delightful—a—why it would work to a dot, don't you see?"

"Perhaps not as clearly as I might, but I can say an emphatic 'yes' to the first four questions. You would have to judge the feasibility of the last of the sentence."

"Oh, as to that there can't be a doubt! And you are so close at hand that I could be called upon at any moment, you know, to explain any point which might puzzle you. Do you think you could undertake it?"

Nobody saw him, but way off in one corner of that vine-covered piazza sat a trixy little sprite. His garments had not cost his regal mother any great amount of thought or outlay and he was not much concerned about wearing apparel. Just now he had upon his

small nose a pair of thick-lensed spectacles, and on his knees rested a ponderous tome, upon the pages of which he was inscribing some strange characters, not with a pen, but with a golden arrow, his writing fluid strongly resembling quicksilver. Now and again he cast sly, quick glances toward the hammock at the other end of the piazza and—is it possible?—pursed up his rose-bud lips and—*winked*.

That was all.

Luncheon time arrived. Professor Forbes remained to the meal, and afterward by the might of his strong arms Mr. Carruth's old Remington was brought forth from the attic and established in a little room at the end of the lower hall, where it was carefully cleaned and adjusted by the two in whose interests it was to click. Then Professor Forbes rushed away on his bicycle to get some copy and in an incredibly short space of time was back with it, and he and Eleanor were lost to everything but Geology. It was safer certainly than her

chemical researches, for rocks were not likely to explode and set the house afire, although volcanoes *do* burst forth unexpectedly at times.

"Miss Jinny, is dat man gwine boa'd hyer?" demanded Mammy, when five-thirty P. M. chimed from the tall hall clock.

"Mammy, hush! He will hear you," remonstrated Mrs. Carruth.

"Well, mebbe if he *do* he'll wake up. Gawd knows he's been here de hull endurin' day, an' if sumpin' nu'er don' start him he gwine be here twell *te-morrer*. *Do,* please ma'am, let Charles go an' ax him ef he don' want he's bicycle put out yander in de stable. It's been a-stanin' dar in de brilin' sun de livelong day an' it's a wunner dem tires ain't bus' wide open."

Mammy's face was filled with concern. Mrs. Carruth looked at her a moment, then laughed outright. Mammy was so transparent.

"Yo' kin laf; yo' kin *laf!*" exclaimed the old

woman indignantly, "but—" and with her sentence unfinished off she stalked.

Professor Forbes dined with the Carruths that evening and when Hadyn called a little later was greeted by:

"Hello! *You* here yet? which so disconcerted him that he promptly overturned a glass of water into Constance's lap. Hadyn looked at him one fleeting second, his eyes twinkling suggestively, then added:

"I say, Forbes, are you a Baptist?"

An hour later Hadyn departed, but Eleanor and the Professor were again deep in limestone deposits, and an outline for the work to be begun the following morning. The quantity of MS. which he had brought over and which was now lying in carefully-assorted chapters upon a small table in the room to be given over to the work, might have daunted a more experienced copyist, but——

Ten chimed out and still poor Eleanor listened and tried to digest. Jean had long since gone to dreamland. Constance, already

prepared for bed, awaited the absorbed scientist's departure. Mammy and Charles dozed and talked alternately as they lingered to close the house for the night, poor Mrs. Carruth nodded in her chair, but at length growing desperate went out into the hall where Constance sat curled up upon a window seat looking at the perfect night.

"O, I *wish* that man would go home. I wish he would," she wailed. "Eleanor is too tired to be so tormented. And I'm *so* sleepy I want to go to bed. If he expected to remain over night why in this world didn't he bring his nightshirt and have *done* with it."

Maybe it was Constance's laugh which pealed forth into the still night air, or the stroke of ten-thirty from the big hall clock, but just then the absorbed Professor *began* to take his departure.

"Mother, *do* go to bed. He's actually going now, I hear him," said Constance, her words choked by laughter. "Go. There isn't

a thing for you to do and you are tired to death."

"I believe I am and I believe I will," agreed Mrs. Carruth, as she kissed Constance good-night and departed for her bedroom. Ten minutes later, while upon her knees at her nightly devotions, a resounding crash brought her to her feet and into a frame of mind which caused her to cry:

"Eleanor, what in the name of calamity *has* happened now?"

"Oh, that manuscript!" moaned a voice from the lower regions. "I didn't want to make a light and I've fallen over the table and upset every solitary sheet. Oh, what *shall* I do? What *shall* I do? I can never get them right again in the world."

"Don't try. It makes no difference. Let them alone and come to bed this minute. That *man* can straighten them out to-morrow, for mark my word he'll *be* here before breakfast!" cried Mrs. Carruth, her last spark of patience gone.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Simmering Plans.

July with its scorching days had given place to August's sultry ones. Aunt Eleanor had offered one of the three girls two weeks at the seashore where she was spending the summer, but her offer had been gratefully declined. Eleanor, stating that she had obtained a quantity of copying to do which would materially add to her little store of savings toward her coming year at college; Constance assuring her Aunt Eleanor that with her candy business flourishing and growing as it was from week to week she positively could not afford to leave it at the present stage. "Then send Jean," urged that lady, whereupon a tornado arose in the Carruth domicile.

"How *could* she go? Wasn't *she* helping just as much as the rest? Didn't she drive to the Riveredge Field Club every single Satur-

day and sell pounds and *pounds* of candy to her own special customers? What would they think if she failed them? Why, they'd go and buy some other kind of candy from somebody else and then where would her trade be? No, indeedy! *She* didn't want any old seashore. She was well enough off where she was, and, besides, without her aid Constance could never in the world get ready the quantity of candy she now had to send to the Arcade each day," etc., etc.

Jean was only eleven, to be sure, but she certainly had some weight upon her side of the argument, for she had been a faithful little worker in the common cause. She and old Baltie were well-known figures throughout that section of the country. With the big box filled with the smaller, dainty boxes of bonbons beside her, she drove the plodding old horse in every direction. It was a common sight to see her halted by the roadside upon one of the warm mornings of that summer resting her steed. Sometimes she would clamber out over

the dash-board and sit astride his back as she held her conversations with him in Hony-huhum language; a language which she had, undoubtedly, mastered far more perfectly than she would ever master her own—much to Eleanor's despair. Again she would seat herself by the roadside and with the faithful old horse's head snuggled into her caressing arms decorate his headstall with goldenrod or asters until he resembled a walking nosegay.

Meanwhile Eleanor clicked away upon her typewriter, rolling off sheet after sheet of manuscript, while Mammy wondered at the nimbleness with which her fingers danced over the keys and the expression of satisfaction upon her countenance.

"My lan'," exclaimed the old woman one morning as she paused in the doorway to watch the flitting fingers, and to look at the pile of copy lying upon the table. "My lan', but you *is* wo'king dat mashine fer fa'r. Don' see how yo' does mak' yo' fingers fly dat-a-way, an' I don' reckon I understans it *no* how. Dese

hyer mashines puzzles me mightily. Kin yer send tilligrams on dat air one jes' lak dat girl down yonder in de Arcyade do? It click perzacly de same. Is it de telegraphy kyind, too?"

"No, Mammy, indeed it isn't. I'm not clever enough for *that*. All I can do is to copy what other people write. I haven't even brains enough to write things myself. I have to earn my bank account by copying Professor Forbes' ideas."

"Professor Fo'bes? Professor Fo'bes? Mh—huh, yes. He *do* seem ter hab a power ob thou'ht 'scendin' 'pon him now-a-days. Has he done sot it all out cl'ar an' plain in dem sheets ob paper? Reckon, dough, it's lucky if he has. If he'd a tried ter hol' it all in ter once he's haid would a bus' fer suah. Spec's dat's de reason he gotter run here mos' ebery day han' runnin'. If he fergit anny ob dose idees de hull book he writin' gwine be spile fer suah. Yas'm, dat *it*, I reckons. Mh, mh!" and nodding her head wisely Mammy stalked off

leaving a rose-tinted face bending over the typewriter.

As to Mammy, her lunch counter was a galloping success from the opening day, for hungry men and maids were not slow to learn where they could obtain a dainty luncheon at a small outlay and, as Mammy had predicted, she had "done cotched dey noses befo' dey reached de segyar stan' "—at least this applied to the masculine noses. The feminine ones were not in need of enticement; they voluntarily sought. From the day Charles, immaculate in white coat and cap, furnished forth his tempting array of home-made dishes, Hadyn Stuyvesant had been his star customer, and if a favored one the world did not suspect it. The "side entrys," as Mammy designated the special dainties, packed carefully in a separate box and given to Charles to set away in his refrigerator until the hour at which his star customer appeared, were dainties literally"fit to set before a king," and Hadyn had never before fared as he fared that summer.

"How does she manage to do it all, Charles?" he asked one day as he sat in the corner specially reserved for him, eating some of Mammy's dainties with a keen relish.

"Huh! Huh!" chuckled Charles delightedly. "Yo' isn't know all dat 'oman is culpuble ob. Her 'dowments is dat 'sprisin' dat I jes' ain't never stop my marvelations ob her sense I done make her Mis' Devon again. Dat I ain'. Why, sah, she ain' never *is* go ter baid 'twell 'leven or twelve 'clock, and I ain't seen ne'er a mornin' I kin git ma eyes open 'fo' *hers* is. She up by five 'clock an' de sight o' stuff she hab reddy fo' dishyer counter jist natchelly mak' ma mouf water. It do, fer a fac'," and Charles wagged his old gray head to emphasize his words.

"But, Charles, how does she ever run things down there, look after Mrs. Carruth's household and the new maid, and keep an eye to the little candy booth yonder? Dear old Mammy, I don't like to think of her working so hard and can't understand the need for it."

Hadyn had lingered over his luncheon until the other customers had departed. Charles was busying himself washing up the cups and saucers as he talked. With cup and towel in hand he drew near to Hadyn's corner, glanced to the right and left to make sure that his words would not be overheard and then confided:

"I done 'spicioned from de fust, I did. Mos' folks t'inks we's jist a wo'king fer ter lay up de kash fer we's ol' age, but Gawd-a-mighty we'd done reach *dat* areddy. M-m, m-m! No *sah, dat* ain' de reason we's a wo'kin'. Dere's a sight mo' cause fo' it dan *dat. We's gotter see dat we'alls chillern ain' go outen de fambly 'dout a cent in dey pockets. Some day dey* gwine meet up wid Mr. Right, an' we ain' neber gwine let *dat man* say de gran'chillern o' ol' Massa a poverty-stricken lot. Bress Gawd, no we ain'!"

Hadyn looked at the old negro man a moment, then hastily laying down his napkin rose to his feet and held out his hand. His eyes

were suspiciously bright as he said in a low voice:

"Charles, give me your hand. Would to heaven every white man could offer one as clean and his body harbor such a soul. Tell Mammy she has no truer friend on earth than Hadyn Stuyvesant, or one who holds her in greater honor. Good-by," and turning he hurried quickly away.

Charles watched him as he went rapidly down the corridor, but dropped his eyes before he disappeared, murmuring:

"Mustn't never watch yo' frien's out ob sight. Bad luck fo' 'em, and Gawd knows we hol's *dat* man too high fer ter bring bad luck on *him*. He like Miss Jinny's own son he dat 'voted to her, an' it's pintedly a pity he *ain'* her son, she need one bad 'nough, she *do* fer a fac'."

For Constance the summer had been one of continuous labor. Up each morning by six o'clock, she was dressed and hard at work in her candy kitchen by half past, Mammy in-

variably on hand with a "snack," as she called it, to sustain the worker until the eight o'clock breakfast was served.

And it took many hours of work now-a-days to keep pace with the constantly growing demand for Constance B's candies, and many a night it was a weary body which laid itself down upon the bed after hours and hours of work; for pulling great masses of molasses candy and drawing out pounds and pounds of flaky cream candy meant no small physical effort, to say nothing of bending over her gas range when the thermometer was mounting upward by leaps and bounds during those hot summer days. Constance had been at her work several months when Mr. Porter sent word to her that there was to be an unusual demonstration on Labor Day, and hinted that it ought to be a red-letter day for the candy booth. The offices in the Arcade would, of course, be closed with the exception of the 'phone booth and telegraph office, but the Arcade was to be used as a starting point for

the parade which would take place that day, and undoubtedly hundreds of people would gather there. He suggested that she have on hand an extra supply of her candies and have several signs printed to hang about in conspicuous places.

Grateful as ever for his interest and the suggestion, Constance fell to work with a will, working with the perseverance and persistency of three girls, Jean and Mrs. Carruth lending all possible assistance. The result was a larger consignment than had ever before been sent to the booth at one time and represented no small outlay in money, labor and effort. If all the boxes were sold Constance would reap very substantial returns.

Mammy and Charles, too, were hard at it, for they saw their opportunity. That household hummed like a hive of bees about to swarm. Early Monday morning, for Labor Day happened to fall upon September 1st that year, the local expressman drove up to the Carruth's back door and box upon box of

candy was placed in his wagon; then driving over to Mammy's cabin he began to load on her hampers of edibles for her counter, thus completely filling his wagon.

"Must be startin' out to do a rushin' business to-day," he said as the last hamper was put upon his wagon.

"Yo' jes' better bait yo' las' dime we *is*," affirmed Mammy. "Hits gwine 'side what we-all good *fer*."

"I fancy you have come nearer the truth than you realize, Mammy," answered Constance who had walked over to the cabin to see the wagon start upon its way. "And, Mammy, listen while I tell you a secret," she added, as she laid her arm across the old woman's shoulder and entered the scrupulously neat cabin. "Do you know what I'm going to do? If I sell all that candy and make just loads and loads of money, I am going to branch out on a scale that will astonish everybody. Yes I *am*."

"Now, look-a-hyer, honey, wha' yo' plannin'

fo' ter do? Don' yo' go a gettin' wild an' skittish like. It won't *do*, I tells yo'."

"Don't worry, Mammy. I'm not going to do anything rash, only my little kitchen in yonder is too small and too hot to do the work in as I wish to do it, and I need more space and I need *help, too,* and I'm going to *have* both if I can afford it, and we will see. Before very long school will begin again and how am I ever to do senior year work and keep up my candy business, too, if people *will* eat such cartloads of it? Yes, Mammy, I'm going to branch out if I can and make sure that the source of revenue doesn't fail, even if I slump like a poor sponge-cake when senior year puts my wits to the final test. Good-by, Mammy. I'm going back to clean up now. That candy kitchen is a sight."

CHAPTER XXIV.

Bread Upon the Waters.

South Riveredge was fairly seething with people. The labor parade, in which every one in commercial or manufacturing circles was interested in any way, had been planned upon a most elaborate scale, every civic organization or private enterprise going in with enthusiasm to make the day a memorable one for the town.

Charles arrived at his counter long before the Arcade was opened and had everything in readiness for the rushing business he was expecting. His tempting counter presented an appearance quite irresistible, for Mammy had outdone herself. Nor had Constance's candy booth been neglected. When Charles had opened up his lunch counter he betook himself to the booth and was struck nearly

speechless to find all beautifully arranged, and Miss Willing smiling upon him.

"Fo' de Lawd's sake, huccum yo' hyer at dishyer time ob day?" he demanded, quite startled out of his Chesterfieldian elegance.

"Thought maybe I could help, for I was sure Mrs. Carruth wouldn't let Miss Constance come over to-day in all *this* rush."

"Well, chile, yo's right *dis* time. Yo' kin bait dat pile ob candy dat Miss Jinny ain' gwine let dat girl put her nose inside de Arcyade *dis* day wid all de riff-raff a ramjammin' roun' lak dey ain' got anudder minit' fer ter live an' see nothin'. My, my! You *is* done fix up dat boof purty. It suah *do* tek a 'oman's han's fer ter gib de las' finishin' touches what mak's de gran'ger. Huccum yo' git de notion?"

"Guess I got it out in the river *first,* and it's been growing ever since. Mrs. Carruth helped it grow while I was there and they've *all* kept it sprinkled and out in the sunshine," was the whimsical reply.

Charles looked at the girl steadily for a moment, his old eyes drawn together in order to focus his failing vision. Then he said:

"Huh-um! Yas'm. I reckons dey all knows how ter tend *sensitive* plants. Dey grows whar dey was borned an' raised at, an' dey's *all* had some spurrience. Yo's lookin' mighty well terday, Miss Willin'. Mighty well. Yo' gown become yo' pintedly. It *do* fer a fac'. Wonner how tis dat some days folks looks dey very bestest, and on odders dey looks lak—lak—well dey e'namos' knocks de bref clar outen yo' body? Dey's dat sort o' spread eve'y which-er-way ter oncet."

"Miss Constance never makes you feel that way, does she?" asked Miss Willing as she glanced at the old man.

"No, *indeedy!*" was the emphatic reply as Charles gave an extra flourish to the big feather duster he was wielding so vigorously across the glass case, for not a speck of dust must rest upon it to-day. "No, indeedy! Yo' see, she's a lady an' she jist natchelly *cyant.*"

"Yes; well, perhaps she can help other people to see how *ladies* dress and do. So you think I look well to-day, Charles? Perhaps this gown won't cut such a dash as the other one did, nor the hat neither, but somehow I feel more as Constance Carruth *looks*." The words ended with a little self-satisfied uplifting of the handsome head. She did not tell Charles that she had sat up night after night to make the gown. It was only a carefully cut and made linen, dark maroon in color and ornamented with linen covered buttons. The monstrous hat which had met its doom in the river that eventful day was replaced by a rough and ready black straw encircled with a silken scarf which matched the gown. Mary Willing had never looked handsomer or more womanly than she looked at that moment.

At length the candy booth was arranged to their mutual satisfaction.

"Now 'm, I'se gwine fer ter hang dese hyer signs eve'ywhars whar an eye kin ketch sight ob 'em, I is," announced Charles as he tucked

about a dozen under his arm and plodded off down the wide corridor. Miss Willing watched him, murmuring to herself as she returned to her 'phone booth.

"I just hope she sells every single pound, I *do*. I ain't going to forget *that* day very soon, no, nor the days that have followed, either. You might think I was the most intimate friend she has when she comes to the booth now, and *she'll* never guess how proud I am to have her stop here and put out her hand to take mine and say 'Good morning, Miss Willing. Are you feeling quite well? Mother bade me give her love to her dark-eyed little girl.' No, *she* don't guess all it means, but *I* know, and you don't catch me making any such fool of myself again as I used to. I've got enough of *that* business. And that senseless Fred Grand! Maybe I'm not glad he's gone off to New York to work. If Mr. Porter never did another thing in his life he'll have done one that's worth while in shipping *him*. Perhaps he'll earn his salt down yonder. Ugh, how I

hate that boy and how I hate myself for going on as I did. 'The little mother down yonder——'" and here a softer expression stole over the girl's face as she looked abstractedly at her switchboard. "'The little mother,' that's what *he* calls her, and the name fits to a T, has said a word or two to set me a-thinking. How good she is to let me run down there every once in a while. Guess I'd have my hands full to steer straight in *this* place if it wasn't for her. I wonder what she meant when she said she had a little plan simmering for me this winter? The girls both looked wise, too, so perhaps they're in it. Well, if *she* is I'll bet it's all O. K. and *I* needn't worry. Ugh, I fairly hate this place now. Trouble is I know too much about men and some of their ways. Not all, for some of 'em are—are, well, they're all right, but the others—bah! I wouldn't care a hoop if every last one of them drowned to-morrow," and with this conclusion to her half-verbal, half-mental train of thought, the girl took up one of

her switches and adjusted it. As she did so there was a flash and a sputter of electricity beneath the booth where the wires connected.

"Mercy on me! Is *that* going to cut up today?" she exclaimed. "I told that electrician that something was wrong with the wires around here, but what good does it ever do for *me* to tell that idiot anything? He'll only grin and say some silly nonsense. But I'll bet five cents there'll be trouble before long."

At ten o'clock the great parade started and the Arcade swarmed with the rushing throngs of people. As Mr. Porter had predicted, the candy booth proved a great attraction and customers hovered about it, pleased with the novelty of the "Help-yourself" experiment, and the little cash box began to fill up as the number of candy boxes grew less.

It was about eleven, and the parade was wending its slow way through the cheering, shouting mass of people when Hadyn Stuyvesant hurried into the Arcade and up to Miss Willing's booth.

"Good-morning, Miss Willing. Stirring times to-day. Too bad you have to be at your booth," he said pleasantly.

"I might as well *not* be, for I haven't had a single call this morning," she replied with a frank, upward glance. Hadyn was quick to feel its contrast to former glances.

"Will you please call up Mrs. Carruth's home for me? I don't believe I need give *you* the number?" he ended interrogatively.

"I don't believe you need," replied Miss Willing with some emphasis, a happy smile curving her lips as she turned to make the connection.

What happened within the next two seconds would take much longer to tell. There was a flash, a report, a burst of flame and it seemed as though the girl, man and entire 'phone booth were instantly enveloped in the blaze which followed an arc light wire straight to Constance's candy booth and in the winking of an eye that, too, was ablaze.

"Quick, get out of the way!" shouted Hadyn,

"there's a short circuit and the whole building may go. Rush for the door."

Mary Willing stood for one instant utterly dazed and then crying:

"Constance's cash box!" rushed toward the blazing booth.

"Stop! You must *not* go there!" cried Hadyn, springing forward to stop her, but she broke away from his detaining hands and the next moment was inside the blazing booth catching up the cash box and tumbling into her upheld skirt as many boxes of candy as she could save, working with a speed and energy that baffled words.

Realizing the gravity of the situation Hadyn dashed to a fire-alarm box not twenty feet away to turn in an alarm and then came back on a dead run. He came at a crucial moment for the pretty linen gown had proved fine food for the flames and was blazing right briskly when he caught up a rug and rolled the girl in it. By that time the engines had come thundering to the rescue of the building and the

crowds of people in and outside of it. The fire was soon extinguished and the current of the crossed wire, which had caused it, shut off, but the poor little candy booth with its pounds and pounds of candy was a complete wreck. And Miss Willing! She was in one of the offices not far from Charles' and Mammy's counter. Most of her beautiful hair was burned off and she was suffering as only those who know the excruciating torture of frightful burns can realize. Her right arm and shoulder were pitiful sights, but not one word of complaint passed her lips as the ambulance physician so hastily summoned sought to relieve her pain, and Charles and Hadyn did all they could to aid him.

"We will get her to the hospital as soon as we ease her pain a little," said the physician.

"No, no! Please don't take me *there*. I want to go home," she begged.

"But you will have much better care at the hospital, Miss Willing," urged Hadyn.

"No, no, please. But the cash box? Where is it and the candy?"

"They are safe—quite safe—" answered Hadyn gently. "Don't give a thought to anything. We'll look to all that."

"Bress Gawd, we's got *yo'*, honey. Wha'd we-all a done ef yo'd a-been burnt up? Dem —dem—cussed wires," half sobbed poor Charles.

"Are you easier now?" asked the doctor.

"Yes, oh, yes, and I can surely go home, can't I?"

"Just rest a moment while I consult with Mr. Stuyvesant," answered the doctor, drawing him aside. In reply to his questions Hadyn's answer was most emphatic. Her crowded home, with her over-worked mother, was no place for her. The hospital was the only one. "Have her taken to the best room in it and send the bill to *me*. Don't let her want for a thing. She has been as brave as a lioness and what she has done was done for love of those who are dearer to me than any others on

earth. I'll see that they come to her at once. But first we will get her settled at St. Luke's."

An hour later Mary Willing was lying upon one of the snowy beds in St. Luke's, a sweet-faced nurse offering her a soothing drink and Mrs. Willing sobbing quietly in a far corner. The good woman was utterly helpless in the face of such an emergency and it was well for the suffering girl that she was not to depend upon her mother's nursing.

Meanwhile Hadyn had driven rapidly to Mrs. Carruth's and as gently as possible told of the disaster which had overtaken Miss Willing and the booth.

"She bade me place these in your hands, Constance," he said, handing the girl the cash box and about two dozen boxes of candy, saved at such cost. Constance took them, gave one look into Hadyn's eyes and then dropping in a little heap upon the floor with her rescued belongings in her lap, and buried her face in her hands and sobbed as though her heart would break.

"Little girl! Little girl, don't—don't. She will soon be better and she shall have every possible care," murmured Hadyn softly as he dropped upon one knee and laid his hand gently upon the bowed head.

"Constance, darling, don't give way. Hadyn is right. We will look to the poor child's needs. Can you drive me to the hospital, dear?" asked Mrs. Carruth as she knelt by Constance.

"I know I'm foolish, but to think of that girl saving this box and the candy and now having to suffer so for it. It seems *so* cruel. There! I'm all right now, but I couldn't help it," and a smile broke through the shower as Constance, with Hadyn's aid, struggled to her feet, letting her boxes fall in a heap upon the floor. Never a word or thought for her own loss. That was entirely forgotten in her concern for Mary Willing. Hadyn was not slow to note that fact, either.

"Are you all right now? Shall I drive the little mother to St. Luke's?"

"Yes, do. Here come the others and they'll make me behave. Go get ready, mother. You'll be a comfort to poor Miss Willing I know. We seem to be destined to figure in flood and fire, but I wish we need not share our calamities with other people."

"You equalize them by sharing a good many blessings," was Hadyn's assertion. "Look out for your little girl, Mammy, and Eleanor and Jean cheer her up," he said as the girls entered the room in Mammy's wake, having just heard the voices below and suspecting that something was wrong.

Ten minutes later Mrs. Carruth was speeding toward St. Luke's with Hadyn.

CHAPTER XXV.

"Let's T'ink ob Our Marcies!"

Strangely enough, not another spot in the whole Arcade was damaged by the fire save that one little corner under the stairway, but the telephone booth and the candy counter were utterly destroyed, not a shelf or board remaining to show what had once been there. And, alas for the pounds and pounds of candy made at such cost to strength and purse! One hopelessly sticky, mushy mess resembling quarts of molasses covered the floor and that was all. As soon as she could get there Constance and Mammy rushed to the Arcade, Mammy wailing and lamenting every foot of the way. It was a discouraging sight which met their eyes. Firemen in rubber coats still dripping water were hauling and tugging their hose back to the hose wagon, and shouting

orders to one another. Representatives of insurance companies were upon the scene to inquire into the extent of the damage, among them Mammy's special bugbear, Mr. Elijah Sniffins, who instantly took advantage of the opportunity to walk up to Constance and speak of the disaster, and say in his suavest tone: "You are mighty lucky to have a good insurance on your business, Miss Carruth."

Constance looked at him in a dazed manner. In the first place she did not know the man from Adam, and in the second the idea of insuring her stand had never entered her head. But before she could collect her wits sufficiently to reply, Mammy bore down upon her and the over-confident Sniffins with fire and brimstone darting from her eyes.

"Yo' chile! Wha' fo' yo' a-stannin' hyer wid all dis hyer muck and trash roun' yo'? Ain' yo' know pintedly dat it no place fo' yo'? Go in yander to Charles' counter and leave *me* to wrastle wid wha's ter be wrastled wid." And linking her arm in Constance's she bore

her off to the protection and privacy of Charles' corner.

Poor Constance felt very much as though a tornado had struck her, and collapsed upon the chair which Charles quickly placed for her, hardly knowing whether to laugh or cry. Up to this moment she had scarcely had time to think of her losses, but Charles' first words brought her to a realizing sense of them.

"Honey, Honey, we'all does suah feel mighty bad fo' yo'. We *does*. Ain' but jist got dat hunnered dollars paid back ter Massa Potah, an' all squared an' cl'ared up an' reddy fer ter do sumpin' gran', when dem cussed wires gotter get twisted and way go de hull sheebang. Bress Gawd dat girl yonder in de hospital done save de kash box, dough. How much yo' hab in it, Honey?"

"O, I haven't the slightest idea, Charles; I never gave it a thought I was so thankful Miss Willing was not burned up, too. It is *so* dreadful for her, poor girl! I feel as though I could

never, never forgive myself for all she is suffering," and Constance's voice broke in a sob.

"Now, look-a-here, Honey, dat's jist all foolishness fer ter feel dat-a-way. How could *you* help her a-rushin' in fer ter save dose t'ings? I'se mighty thankful she done see her way cl'ar fer ter make 'mends fo' some ob her foolish gwin's on. I *is*. She gwine be a little 'oman f'om now on, yo' mark ma words. She ain' been nothin' 'tall but a little fool up ter de time she get half drowned daid, an' yo' ma begin fer ter take her in han'. *Now* she jus' startin' out fer ter show dat she's got de right sort ob stuff in her atter all."

Constance was about to protest against Charles' harsh logic when a voice called over the counter:

"Is Miss Constance here, Charles-Rastus? I've been looking all over the place for her. Hello! yes, there you are, little girl. Well, I'm glad I've found you at last. Mammy seemed to think I was preparing to give you the rating of your life because you'd poured syrup all

over our clean floors, and to save my soul I couldn't get her to tell me what had become of you. She's a case, that old lady," ended Mr. Porter as he made his way around the lunch counter and entered the little swinging door which gave entrance to Charles' sacred domains.

Constance sprung to her feet to place her hand in the one so warmly extended and look up into the kind eyes smiling at her so encouragingly as she said:

"Oh, but I *am* so sorry for the mess, Mr. Porter. It is such a pity and the Arcade is always so tidy."

Mr. Porter looked at her a moment, an odd light creeping into his face. Then he asked:

"But how about the girl who has lost all her candy, her fixings and her business cubby? Aren't you sorry for her? Seems to me it's a pretty big stock to lose and sort of knocks business sky-high, doesn't it?"

"Yes, I know it's going to be a pretty heavy loss, but I'm so thankful to know that I'm not

in *debt* that somehow I feel as though I could begin all over again without minding so very much. I'm more distressed about poor Miss Willing than the candy. Oh, I *hope* she'll soon be well."

"Whether she is well soon or not that little girl has got more to thank *you* for than you will ever have to thank her for," answered Mr. Porter, very seriously.

"Me?" cried Constance, incredulously. "Why, I never did one single solitary thing for her in all my life."

"No doubt *you* look at it that way, but others see differently. I understand that Stuyvesant has taken your mother straight to her."

"Oh, yes; of course she went at once," was the simple answer.

"Of course," echoed Mr. Porter. "But I've got something here I want you to hold tight fast to and when you have time after this fuss and excitement are all over, just sit down and read it carefully. Perhaps Stuyvesant will go home with you all this evening. If he does, get

him to read it with you. It's just a little plan of business I got a notion to carry out about a month ago to sort of guard against any mischance doing me out of my Saturday's candy. I'd never in this world dare go home to those girls Saturday afternoon without some of those boxes under my arm, I can tell you. Keep that envelope safe. It's an extra fine quality of paper, and now good-by. I've got to go and blow a man sky-high and give him another sort of paper—his walking paper—for it's all his fault that we're burned out. If he hadn't spent his Saturday's wages on a black bottle he would have been able to see that the insulation of that arc light was destroyed and the wire in direct contact with the telephone switchboard. It is a wonder Miss Willing was not reduced to a cinder days ago—at least *that's* what the inspector tells me."

Constance gave a half comprehending glance at the big envelope she held, then almost mechanically placed it in her hand-bag. It was not until the family, with Hadyn Stuy-

vesant as their guest, was gathered around the cheerful, snapping logs in the library that evening that she thought of it again. They had been talking about Miss Willing.

"Oh, my envelope," she cried, springing to her feet and running into the hall. "Mr. Porter handed me this and told me to look at it when I'd simmered down a little. Here, Hadyn, he said *you* would be the one to solve its mysteries. So go ahead. I'm sick of the very smell of the Arcade and candy."

Hadyn took the big envelope, opened it and made a low exclamation.

"What is it? A suit for damages for burning up Mr. Porter's staircase?" ventured Constance. Mrs. Carruth looked concerned; Eleanor puzzled. Jean, with the confidence of her love for Hadyn, snuggled down upon the arm of his chair with her arm across his shoulder and her sunny, curly crown against his dark one. He inclined his slightly toward her, giving a little caressing snuggle to testify his approval of her demonstration.

"Is it something bad?" she whispered.

"Something decidedly good, *I* should call it. Constance, you must have been born under a lucky star. This insures you in full for all loss by fire. Mr. Porter has evidently had your business stand insured without your let or hindrance. Here is a little note he has tucked in the envelope: *'Had* to take some precautions until this little business woman's business experience was broader. Couldn't lose my sweeties and don't like syrup mixed with ashes. Good-luck, little girl, and God bless you for your pluck. Yours,

'F. D. PORTER.'"

Jean gave one wild screech and hugged Hadyn as though she meant to strangle him. Constance started to her feet and stood with clasped hands looking at Hadyn as though she could not credit his words. Eleanor nearly collapsed everybody present by crying: "Well, that man's a brick!" while Mrs. Carruth stepped quickly up to Constance and kissing her gently as she said in her soft voice: *"Now,*

sweetheart, we *can* do as we hoped, can't we? I am so glad."

"My heartiest congratulations, Constance!" exclaimed Hadyn when he could disengage one hand from the embrace of the little bear who had pounced upon him.

It was a moment of keen excitement, and, like most other momentous ones, brought Mammy upon the scene to learn what was causing it.

"An' *dat's* what dat pesterin' Sniffins man meant, is it?" she sputtered, when she was told the facts. "Well, I forgives him *dis* time, but he better had keep 'way f'om *my* white folks. *He* is too sassy fer ter suit me. But bress Gawd, we mus' t'ink ob our marcies, fo' we suah *is* got a power of 'em. 'Night, ladies. 'Night, Massa Stuyv'sant. I gotter go 'long and see dat dat triflin' nigger-girl put de silver in de safe and do her juty. Den I gotter sort o' get Charles settled down. He's pintedly rattled atter all dese hyer day's doin's. He *is*," and off trudged Mammy.

Weeks passed before Mary Willing was able to leave St. Luke's, and during that time she learned the true meaning of friendship. Not a day passed without a demonstration of it.

Only those who have suffered the excruciating pains of severe burns can understand what the girl suffered physically, and her torment of mind, lest she forfeit her position, kept her in a fever of unrest which baffled the most skilful nursing. In vain the kind, attentive nurses sought to learn the secret of the mental disturbance which was so baffling their skill. Not a word would the girl utter. And so the weary weeks passed by and October's frosts came to make nights chilly and days like sparkling wine.

It was Constance who solved the secret of her unrest. The day before Mary Willing left the hospital Hadyn drove Constance up to see her. The girl looked like a walking posy, for she carried a huge cluster of asters, purple, yellow and white, and as she entered said:

"Aren't they pretty enough to make you feel quite well? *I* love them."

"They are lovely, and you are *so* good to me," answered the girl, gratefully, as she took the big bunch from Constance's hands and rested her face against it. She looked pale and showed traces of her burns even after her weeks at St. Luke's.

"Indeed, I'm only paying my debts," laughed Constance. "We are *all* so sorry, so terribly sorry that you had to suffer so. But I've come with a little message and a little plan, and a *big* idea, and I *do* hope you will agree to it. Mother and I have powwowed it all over and we are *sure* we can make it go just beautifully. You see that fire which cost *you* so much just made *me* rich and helped me carry out an idea which has been fairly boiling inside of me. Mr. Porter is the dearest man in this world, and has the kindest way of doing favors of any one I know. Just makes you feel as though *he* were the favored one

all the time. But you've heard from mother all about it. She promised to tell you."

Mary Willing nodded.

"And now I'm going to have a regular candy kitchen and start out on a wonderful scale, only I *can't* do it all alone. You see, I've got *this* year at school, for I hate not to graduate, though I don't believe my brains will ever make the family rich. Nornie'll do that, and if I'm not glad she's at college—a full-fledged freshman! But let me get back to this plan. Mr. Porter has fixed up the *whole* space under the stairs for me and put the 'phone booth somewhere else, and the new girl—"

"Oh!" gasped Miss Willing, clasping her hands and turning pale. Constance laughed outright as she laid her hand over the clasped ones. *"Yes, the new girl*—who isn't a girl at all, but Mrs. Webster—will take charge of it. Mother has planned it all. Mrs. Webster needs the work, she is old enough not to be—not to be—well, not to find it disagreeable

sometimes, and *you,* why, *you* are to come and help me with my candy kitchen. Yes, truly you are. There is to be an extension built right on to Mammy's house, with everything in it I can possibly need in the way of shelves and closets and gas ranges and pots and pans, and, oh, every contrivance you can think of. Mr. Stuyvesant has begun it already, you know we're his tenants, and I'm going to teach you how to make my candies, and while I'm at school you'll be as busy as a bee. Then when I get home we'll pack and get the boxes all ready to go off next morning. Isn't that a *splendid* plan? It may not be so easy just at first, but Mammy will be right close by to help you till you learn, and mother'll be at hand to cheer you up if things don't go just straight and—and—well, you don't mind, do you? but we found out what the telephone people pay you and we know that with our growing trade we can pay you just the same, and you'll come, won't you?"

Constance had talked against time and her

own feelings, for Mary Willing had withdrawn her hands and pressed them over her eyes, tears falling from between the thin fingers.

Constance got up and laid her hand upon the girl's shoulder, saying softly: "Please, *please* don't feel so unhappy. I didn't mean to make you so, truly I didn't. I wanted to make you glad."

"If you only knew *how* glad you have made me!" cried Mary Willing, suddenly seizing her handkerchief and wiping away the tears and then turning her great dark eyes up to Constance's. "If you only knew how I hated the very thought of going back to the Arcade and all, all—well, lots of things there—you'd know how happy I am. Why, I'll make *hundreds* of pounds of candy for you, and I won't let you pay me a single cent. It'll be enough just to *be* there near you all every day."

Constance's merry laugh brought the white-capped nurse to the door, but, seeing the happy faces, she slipped away again, sure that the

tonic given by this visiting nurse would be worth quarts of drugs.

"That's all very nice, but you see you've got to earn enough to pay your *carfare* down to Riveredge at least, and maybe shoes to stand in, because you have to do a lot of standing when candy is being made. So we'd better not quarrel over the great salary I can offer. By the first of November everything will be ready to begin, and so will *you,* won't you?"

For answer Mary Willing put her arms about Constance and hugged her as only a grateful girl can.

And so grew the candy enterprise from a modest little venture to something that surprised even its young manufacturer. By November first all was in full swing: Eleanor at college, working, as she wrote home, like a house afire. Miss Willing doing her best to prove her gratitude to those who had looked into the future for her and removed some of the stumbling blocks over which she was sure to trip. Jean was still acting as traveling

saleswoman for the company, Mammy and Charles doing a flourishing business with their luncheon counter and rapidly laying aside the sum of money upon which their devoted old hearts were set as a "nes' aig fer dem chillern." Mrs. Carruth, the little mother to all, for hardly a day passed now without Hadyn dropping in, and the chummy friendship between him and Constance grew with each. Professor Forbes kept in close touch with Eleanor's progress and gave her many a "boost." What the friendships would ripen into for her girls Mrs. Carruth did not strive to foresee, but, knowing both men as she had made it her loving duty to know them, let a higher power guide hearts and souls according to His wisdom. What the ensuing years developed must be told in another story.

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